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ABSTRACT

This report discusses six programs being considered by the 108th Congress for reauthorization, focusing on policies designed to assist disconnected and at-risk youth. The review seeks to identify how the programs do or do not consider at-risk or disconnected youth ad how such programs might be improved. After an introduction by Alan Houseman, six papers include: "The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act and Disconnected Youth" (Cynthia G. Brown and Andy Hartman); "The Higher Education Act and Disconnected Youth" (Thomas R. Wolanin); "The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Disconnected Youth" (Cynthia G Brown and Jennifer Mezey); "The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act and Disconnected Youth" (Bob Reeg); "The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program and Disconnected Youth" (Jodie Levin-Epstein); and "The Workforce Investment Act and Disconnected Youth" (Nisha Patel and Steve Savner). (Contains 37 endnotes.) (SM)

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Leave No Youth Behind:

Opportunities for Congress to Reach Disconnected Youth

Jodie Levin-Epstein and Mark H. Greenberg
Editors

July 2003

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Introduction

By Alan Houseman

"...Investment in youth and their future in the workforce is one of the most important things we can do to ensure that our country remains strong."

—Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao,[1] March 2003

Over the next several decades, the United States will face a worker gap, a skills gap, and a wage gap. There will be too few workers to meet demand. The workers who are available will lack the skills and education required. And the wage gap between high-skill workers and low-skill workers will continue to widen. Filling these gaps will require developing better trained and more skilled workers for productive jobs with upward mobility.[2] A key part of this strategy involves ensuring that the nation's youth enter adulthood well-educated, prepared for work, and able to integrate into society.

However, many young people are not on a path toward successful entrance into adult society. While we do not know the exact number, estimates of those who are disconnected from society or at risk of becoming disconnected range from nearly 3 million to more than 7 million. For instance, more than 5 million youth between the ages of 16 and 24 (15 percent of the total youth population) are out of school and out of work.[3] A significant portion of these youth—3 million or 8 percent—are high school dropouts and unemployed youth not being supported by a spouse or partner; high school graduates who have stopped looking for work; and youth who are either homeless, incarcerated, parenting as teens, or exiting from foster care without a stable place to live.[4] This group is likely to be disconnected from the labor force on a long-term basis.

The United States does not have a coherent youth policy to prevent at-risk youth from becoming disconnected and to help disconnected youth become productive members

of society.[5] Instead we have a patchwork of fragmented and often poorly funded programs at the federal level that do not have common objectives or accountability measures. Nor do state and local areas typically have comprehensive youth policies.

A civic society at all levels has a responsibility to help at-risk and disconnected youth overcome the hardships of their early lives and the failed policies of public institutions and agencies. An economically competitive society should help these youth overcome these obstacles in order to increase the proportion of young people who at age 25 (1) have a high school diploma and postsecondary degree, (2) are employed in jobs with career advancement possibilities, and (3) are not engaged in adverse risk-taking behaviors. Accomplishing these goals will require new and better coordinated federal policies, increased funding targeted on at-risk and disconnected youth, and high priority to disconnected youth in state and local deliberations on funding priorities and policy directions.

The Focus of This Report

This report discusses six programs being considered by the 108th Congress for reauthorization, using a lens of policies to assist disconnected and at-risk youth. By bringing together these programs, this report provides a rare opportunity to identify their common challenges and concerns related to disconnected youth. The six programs are:

- Adult education and literacy programs of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) in Title II of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA);
- Financial aid programs and programs addressing cultural and academic barriers to access to higher education under the Higher Education Act (HEA);
- Special education and related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA);
- Services and programs for homeless and runaway youth funded by the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA);
- Services and cash assistance provided to youth under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant; and
- Youth services and activities funded under WIA.

These six programs are certainly not the only ones that serve at-risk youth, but their reauthorizations provide an important opportunity to look across a set of key programs.[6]

This review of six programs seeks to identify how these programs do or do not consider at-risk or disconnected youth and how the programs might be improved for this population. Some of these programs are wholly about disconnected youth (e.g., the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act); other programs reach at-risk youth but have no explicit policies related to them. Thus, the challenge has been to identify potential policy changes that are of particular import for this population, rather than addressing overarching program policies that have broader scope. For example, a major issue for the TANF program is whether parental work requirements will be increased; this overarching program policy would undoubtedly have an influence on youth in TANF families, but we have tried to train our lens on policies that are particularly focused on the youth population.

A broad range of voices in and outside of government are speaking on the issue of disconnected and at-risk youth. For example, the President has established a White House Task Force for Disadvantaged Youth, which is charged with developing a "comprehensive federal response...to the problems of youth failure, with a focus on enhanced agency accountability and effectiveness."[7] The Task Force's final report with recommendations is scheduled for this fall. And many youth organizations have made policy recommendations to Congress on legislation affecting their constituencies; for instance, the Forum for Youth Investment issued *A Big Picture Approach: The Federal Government's Role in Youth Development in the 108th Congress* in December of 2002.

Through this year's reauthorizations, Congress has the opportunity to make immediate decisions that could influence outcomes for at-risk and disconnected youth. At the same time, we hope that this publication will encourage the process of looking across federal legislative initiatives in efforts to develop an integrated set of policies to address the needs of this population.

The authors include CLASP staff and authors not affiliated with CLASP. The recommendations made in each individual chapter are the recommendations of the chapter's author or authors; the recommendations in this introduction are all CLASP recommendations.

Who Are Disconnected and At-Risk Youth?

Experts have defined at-risk or disconnected youth in a variety of ways. For example:

- The Department of Labor uses the category of "youth at risk," defined as: non-college youth in general; out-of-school youth, particularly economically disadvantaged youth; minority youth and high school dropouts; and youth growing up in high-poverty communities. DOL estimates the population to be as large as 7.5 million.[8]
- Andrew Sum and his colleagues define disconnected youth as those youth ages 16-24 who are currently out of school and out of work. They numbered about 5.2 million in 2001, representing 15 percent of all youth aged 16-24.[9] Under Sum's definition, the out-of-school and out-of-work population of 16- to 24-year-olds does not include youth who were homeless, or inmates of jail, prison, and other institutions. On the other hand, it does include some young people who have left the labor force voluntarily, are taking time off from work or postsecondary education, or are unemployed but have reasonable job skills and are connected to social networks. However, most are not that fortunate.
- Doug Besharov and Karen Gardiner have used a definition of disconnectedness for youth aged 16-23 that focuses on four factors: not enrolled in school (including dropping out or not continuing onto postsecondary after graduation from high school), not employed, not in the military, and not married. Youth meeting these criteria for 26 weeks or more out of any calendar year were considered to be disconnected. Using these criteria, Besharov found that 37 percent of youth 16-23 were disconnected in at least one calendar year, 24 percent were disconnected for 1-2 years, and 14 percent were disconnected for 3 or more years.[10]
- Michael Wald and Tia Martinez use a definition intended to identify the characteristics of those at greatest risk of still being disconnected at age 25. Under Wald's definition, disconnected youth are ones who are (1) high school dropouts who are unemployed or out of the labor force and not being supported by a spouse or partner; (2) high school graduates who have stopped looking for work; or (3) in prison, homeless, or have exited from foster care without having a job or being in school or without a stable place to live. These youth are more likely than other youth to experience long-term joblessness and social isolation. Approximately 2.8 million youth (8 percent of all youth aged 16-24) meet this definition.[11]

Each of these definitions provides a helpful perspective on the issues. Ideally, one would want a definition that identified both those currently in need of services and those at highest risk of facing bad outcomes (e.g., sustained unemployment, criminal engagement, teen parenting, homelessness, etc.) without intervention. For purposes of this report, we consider "disconnected youth" to be those aged 16-24 who are out of school and out of work for a sustained period and are without ready access to social and family supports.

According to Wald and Martinez, youth who in 2001 were at greatest risk of disconnection by age 25 had the following demographic characteristics:

- 66 percent had less than a high school degree.
- 58 percent were male.
- 58 percent were black or Hispanic.
- 30 percent were parents and 18 percent had a minor child in the household.
- 19 percent were in prison or jail, meaning 500,000 (mostly male) youth were in correctional facilities.
- 14 percent were persons with disabilities.
- 12 percent were foreign born.
- Many had no family and had lived for long periods of time in foster care.[12]

There are striking differences between disconnected men and women. Disconnected men are much more likely to be incarcerated (30 percent compared to 2 percent), while disconnected women are far more likely to have a minor child in the household (37 percent compared to 1.4 percent). In addition, males who are African American are more likely to be disconnected: between 25 and 30 percent of African American youth aged 16-24 are disconnected, while the proportion for the overall population of 16- to 24-year-olds is 8-10 percent.[13]

Key Risk Factors for Disconnection

A variety of youth are particularly at risk for disconnection and for poor outcomes in the labor market as adults:

High school dropouts: More than 4 million youth aged 16-24 are high school dropouts.[14] This may be a conservative estimate: a recent analysis suggested that 6.8 million or 28 percent of young adults age 16-24 were public school dropouts and immigrant youth who never attended school.[15] High school dropouts are less likely to be employed and more likely to be unemployed for a year or longer. During 2001, only 55 percent of high school dropouts were employed compared to 74 percent of high school graduates.[16] More than a quarter of dropouts (27 percent) were unemployed for a year or longer as compared to 11 percent of those with a high school degree.[17]

Pregnant and parenting teens: Although teen birth rates fell in the 1990s, almost half a million teens gave birth in 2001,[18] and the birth rate for U.S. teenagers continues to be much higher than for other industrialized countries.[19] Almost 60 percent of teens with a school-age pregnancy drop out at some point between 8th and 12th grade, with more than a quarter of these teen mothers dropping out *before* they were pregnant.[20] Women who become pregnant while teens are less likely to get a high school diploma or GED by age 30,[21] and their children have poorer school performance.[22]

Incarcerated youth: In October 2000, 110,284 offenders younger than 21 resided in juvenile justice facilities.[23] In mid-year 2001, 10,760 individuals defined as juveniles were incarcerated in federal, state, and local jails; 88,300 youth aged 18-19 and 347,900 young adults aged 20-24 were incarcerated in all prison and jail facilities.[24] Formerly incarcerated young men face great barriers to employment, including discrimination by employers, a lack of education, and a lack of support services. Some survey data suggest that up to 60 percent of former inmates of all ages are not employed in the regular market one year after being released.[25]

Youth from low-income families: Children who grew up in the poorest one-fifth of American families are more than twice as likely to end up dropping out of high school (34 percent versus 16 percent) or being unemployed and out of school at age 24 (17 percent versus 7 percent), compared with children who grew up in the middle fifth.[26]

Youth with literacy problems: A growing number of people cannot read or write at the levels necessary for employment in higher wage jobs. For example, 20 percent of adults read at or below the fifth grade level. A survey by the American Management Association found that more than 38 percent of job applicants lacked the necessary reading, writing, and math skills to do the jobs they sought in 1999. Of course, literacy problems start at a young age—for example, 60 percent of fourth graders from low-income families cannot read at grade level.[27]

Youth who speak English as a second language: In 20 percent of our nation's households, a language other than English is spoken. According to a 1995 study, English language learners were almost twice as likely to drop out of high school as those who were fully proficient in English. Almost 40 percent of foreign-born 18- to 29-year-olds arriving in the U.S. during the past five years do not have a regular high school diploma or a GED certificate.[28] Out-of-school immigrant males were more likely to be working than their native-born counterparts (81 versus 75 percent) despite the fact that they were less well educated than native-born men. Immigrant women, on the other hand, were much less likely to be working than their native-born peers (53 versus 69 percent), an employment gap of 16 percentage points.[29]

Youth with disabilities: Students with disabilities have higher dropout rates than other students. One of five adults with disabilities has not graduated from high school, compared to less than one of ten adults without disabilities. Only 14 percent of youth with disabilities attend postsecondary schools, as compared with 53 percent of other students. Only 31 percent of adults with disabilities ages 21 through 64 are employed, and adults with disabilities earn significantly less than adults without disabilities and are more likely to be poor.[30]

Youth in the foster care system: In 2000, 556,000 children were in foster care.[31] During 1999, 56,593 children ages 16 and older left the foster care system, including 18,544 foster children who "aged out" of the system.[32] The only national study of youth who have aged out of foster care found that 38 percent were emotionally disturbed, 50 percent had used illegal drugs, and 25 percent were involved with the legal system.[33] Only 48 percent had graduated from high school. Many were unemployed: two to four years after they left foster care, only 38 percent had stayed employed and only 48 percent had held a full-time job.[34]

The Need for Action

The costs to society for failing to help at-risk and disconnected youth are substantial. For example, an Urban Institute study estimates about $80 billion is lost in earnings for each year's class of 450,000 high school dropouts.[35] A high school dropout will earn 39 percent less over his or her lifetime than a person with an associate's degree from a two-year college.[36] A 1996 study estimated that teen childbearing costs $30 billion annually, including the costs associated with helping young teen parents, as well as the productivity losses of teen mothers, the fathers of their children, and the children when they reach adulthood.[37]

Uneducated and undereducated youth are less likely to get jobs and more likely to remain poor; in addition, youth are more likely to lose jobs during economic downturns. In 2001 and 2002, 53 percent of the 2 million in employment losses were by youth 16-24, even though they comprised only 15 percent of the civilian labor force.[38] And economic dislocation is felt more acutely by minority groups. During 2001, for instance, 75 percent of white youth were employed compared to only 68 percent of Hispanic youth and 57 percent of black youth.[39] Moreover, compared to white and Hispanic youth, black youth employment falls by a greater percentage during economic downturns.[40] Furthermore, it appears that the longer youth are disconnected the more they engage in criminal and other risk-taking behavior. For example, a recent study points out that while only 20 percent of 18- and 19-year-old males who are disconnected are incarcerated, fully 46 percent of 24-year-old males who are disconnected are in prison or jail.[41]

The adverse consequences of *not* acting will only increase over the next decade as the youth population in the U.S. grows, especially among minorities and immigrants. Between 1992 and 2001, the number of 16- to 24-year-olds increased from 31 million to 35 million, and the number is projected to reach 39 million by 2010.[42] Moreover, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the youth labor force (aged 16-24) is expected to grow more rapidly than the overall labor force for the first time in 25 years. These overall growth rates of the youth cohorts vary by race/ethnic group and by immigrant status. The lowest projected rate of growth will be among white, non-Hispanics (5 percent). In a middle range are American Indians (13 percent) and blacks (17 percent). The highest rates of growth will be among Hispanics (34 percent) and Asian Americans (36 percent). Increased numbers of immigrants will likely increase these latter percentages over the next decades.[43]

In short, society will benefit by preventing at-risk youth from becoming disconnected and by helping disconnected youth reconnect to employment and education. Disconnected youth are far more likely than other youth to engage in criminal activities, anti-social behavior, and teenage parenting. However, *connected* youth will become productive members of society, help the economy grow, and generate increased tax revenues and increased consumption. They will engage in appropriate civil affairs and neighborhood activities, increase the quality of civic life, and strengthen social cohesion. They will save funds that now go to prisons and jails and government financial support. They will become better parents and mentors, meaning fewer children will end up in foster care or on public assistance. Fewer children will be poor, and more will live in stable, two-parent families.

Effective programs can make a difference in improving outcomes for disconnected youth. In the last 10 years in particular, evidence has emerged about effective strategies for engaging youth and helping them succeed in education and the labor market (including such programs as Career Academies, Big Brothers, Big Sisters, Conservation Corps, Center for Employment Training, Quantum Opportunity Program, and the Children's Aid Society-Carrera Program).[44] According to a recent paper by MDRC, the most effective youth programs have a youth development perspective that (1) helps young people connect to society through the presence of caring adults, a family-like atmosphere, camaraderie with peers and staff, and a sense of belonging; (2) meets youth's financial, education, and social needs by providing, for example, opportunities for paid work and use of financial incentives, work experience projects that serve the community, experiential education and training activities and training in resiliency skills, and opportunities for leadership development; and (3) takes into account the life circumstances of at-risk youth by having staff members who are accessible at all hours.[45] Many who have examined youth programs would emphasize the critical importance of adult relationships to disconnected youth—in fact, according to Gary Walker of Public/Private Ventures, "it is the glue which holds things together, and keeps youth motivated when the inevitable rough spots occur."[46]

Opportunities in the 108th Congress

To ensure future productivity and social stability for our country, our nation should commit itself to increase the proportion of young people who at age 25: (1) have a high school diploma and postsecondary degree or credential, (2) are employed in jobs with career advancement possibilities, and (3) are not engaged in adverse risk-taking behaviors.

The recommendations in this report (which can be found in shaded boxes in each chapter) seek to advance this set of goals and to improve public policy on key transition points for significantly disconnected youth, which include (1) dropping out of high school, (2) having a child out of wedlock before age 20, (3) entry into or reentry from the juvenile or criminal justice system, and (4) leaving foster care or residential placements when they are 18 or older.[47]

These recommendations focus on the six programs being reauthorized and do not purport to address the full range of initiatives needed by at-risk and disconnected youth. A broader agenda would include restructuring secondary and postsecondary education; greatly expanding the funding for alternative and comprehensive programming, including educational programming, for disconnected youth;

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aligning the education and "second chance" training systems; and reforming our juvenile and criminal justice systems.[48]

In addition, policymakers at all levels must pay attention to how the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act is being implemented because of its focus on raising the achievement gap of poor students, disabled students, and students from racial-ethnic minorities, all of whom are more likely than other students to become disconnected. Effective implementation of NCLB should reduce the number of disconnected youth ages 16 to 24 and could open up funding for alternative programs, which have been effective in reaching disconnected youth. However, some analysts fear that the lack of full federal funding and the pressure for schools to do well on state tests will lower some state academic achievement requirements or could lead to increased dropout rates.[49]

Moreover, a significant future agenda for Congress is to consider and propose policies across programs and funding streams that serve disconnected youth. Such policies should attempt to address the concern that separate programs tend to operate within their own isolated "silos." To effectively address the needs of disconnected youth, multiple programs and funding streams need to work in concert. Among the policies Congress should consider are ones that would:

- **Articulate a clear goal for the nation's youth** to help establish both that youth are an important population and what programmatic success means.
- **Establish a common definition of disconnected youth** and require all relevant programs to report on the extent to which disconnected youth are served.
- **Establish "youth find"** mechanisms in all appropriate programs to identify those who are school dropouts and hard-to-employ and to assist them in accessing programs that can improve their prospects.
- **Improve coordination** by encouraging or requiring state and local entities to better coordinate and blend funding streams to ensure adequate funding for more proven programs that effectively serve disconnected youth.
- **Create transition provisions** where they do not currently exist to ensure that, before a youth leaves a program and at key risk points,

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there are effective plans for further education, training, or employment in place.

- **Improve accountability** by enacting a common core set of youth performance measures.

In our examination of the six programs, we have seen that programs that reach disconnected youth can be improved in a variety of ways, but we have been struck even more by the fact that some youth are not reached at all. The policy recommendations contained in the chapters that follow are directed either to preventing youth from becoming disconnected or helping disconnected youth reconnect to the educational or employment systems. The main themes covered in the following chapters include:

Preventing disconnection: Federal youth policy should intervene early to prevent at-risk youth aged 16-24 from becoming disconnected. It is easier to keep young people in school than it is to get them back after they have left the formal system.[50] Because of the central role of secondary and postsecondary education in prevention, the chapters on IDEA and AEFLA focus on preventing disconnection.

Reconnecting disconnected youth: The following chapters also focus on reconnecting high school dropouts to school, training, or other programs; connecting out-of-work, out-of-school high school graduates or those with a GED to jobs or higher education; helping teen mothers remain connected to critical support networks and enabling them to develop necessary skills for a more productive and fulfilling life; and connecting juveniles and young adults who are in prison or reentering society to education and other services.[51]

Improving how programs work together: By improving coordination among programs, youth should be able to move seamlessly through education and supportive programs. For example, one recommendation is to use the existing Youth Councils structure created by WIA to improve coordination and collaboration between all of the education programs and WIA, TANF, and RHYA.

Providing transitional services for youth: Youth at risk of disconnection would benefit from enhanced transitional services from one system or program to another. For instance, the IDEA chapter recommends adopting congruent language in IDEA,

the Rehabilitation Act, and WIA regarding the planning and provision of transition services for youth with disabilities from school to postsecondary education or employment.

Maintaining and increasing funding for at-risk and disconnected youth: These chapters recommend preserving existing funding for some programs at risk of being cut, increasing funding for effective programs that work, creating new programs with new funds, and better using existing funding streams. For example, many critical programs, such as the WIA youth programs and the HEA financial aid programs, Talent Search programs, and Educational Opportunity Centers, receive far less federal funding than necessary to meet the need.

Improving access: Sometimes eligibility requirements prevent at-risk and disconnected youth from accessing the programs that could help them. For example, the TANF chapter proposes to permit states to establish a "transitional compliance" period for income-eligible minor parents, such as school dropouts and homeless youth, to give them time to meet particular education/training or living arrangement requirements.

Expanding services: All of the chapters propose to expand services to more effectively assist youth who risk disconnection or are already disconnected. For example, the chapter on HEA recommends expanding grants and improving access to postsecondary education, and expanding the provision of child care to help low-income students gain and maintain access to postsecondary education.

Improving data collection: Inconsistent definitions and gaps in data collection hamper our understanding of the current situation of at-risk and disconnected youth. For example, a recommendation of this report is to make dropout data for students with disabilities comparable to data for the general population.

Undertaking new research: Most chapters suggest that the federal government fund additional research to improve services for at-risk and disconnected youth. For example, the report proposes dedicated funds for high-quality new research on reading development and instruction for youth with reading difficulties, including youth with disabilities.

Conclusion

Congress, the Administration, and the public face a two-fold public policy challenge: (1) ensuring that all young people stay connected to school and work and (2) helping those young people who have become disconnected obtain necessary education and skills, find jobs with career advancement possibilities, and not engage in adverse, risk-taking behaviors. To remain strong as a society with economic productivity and growth, international competitiveness, and stability and cohesiveness, we will have to meet this challenge.

The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act and Disconnected Youth

By Cynthia G. Brown and Andy Hartman

Overview

The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) is a federal program to assist undereducated people, who are age 16 and above and no longer enrolled in secondary school, in improving their literacy skills. In 1998, it was reauthorized and incorporated into the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) as Title II. Most of its funding ($575 million of $591 million overall in FY 2002) is distributed to states and must be matched with one dollar of state funds (or an "in-kind" equivalent) for every four dollars of federal funds. Up to 10 percent of the funds may be spent on correctional education in jails and prisons.

The AEFLA relates to disconnected youth in several important ways. It provides the opportunity for out-of-school youth to complete their high school educations or earn GED credentials. It supports programs for English language learners who are out of school and over the age of 16. It assists parents, including young parents, in obtaining the educational skills to become full partners in the education of their children. It provides education for youth who are soon to be released from correctional or other institutions.

The low level of federal funding for AEFLA relative to the documented need affects the quality, intensity, and availability of AEFLA services for both adults and youth. For example, close to six million people aged 18-29 lack a high school diploma or a GED.[1]

At the same time, 1.1 million youth participate in adult education programs.[2] Adult education programs are of variable quality and often lack appropriate curriculum, adequate technology, and well-prepared instructors. They also face problems with student retention, as some students leave after just a few classes and others cycle in and out of programs.

Nearly all of the participants in adult education programs attend voluntarily, but some students are required to attend as a condition of receiving TANF payments or as a condition set by the courts. Some observers contend that some low-performing high school youth are pushed out of high school and into adult education programs so that they will not be counted as dropouts in state accountability systems for elementary and secondary schools.

In the 108th Congress to date, the House of Representatives has passed an AEFLA reauthorization as Title II of the Workforce Investment Act. The Senate is beginning deliberations. In addition, the Administration has issued a summary of reauthorization ideas for AEFLA.[3]

What Is the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act?

While federal and state efforts to support and encourage adult education began over 200 years ago, the Adult Basic Education state grant program was first enacted in 1964 as part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).[4] In 1998, the Adult Education Act was renamed the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act and moved out of ESEA and reauthorized as Title II of WIA. Most of the Title II funds support grants to states, but support is also provided for National Leadership Activities and the independent National Institute for Literacy.[5] AEFLA received a federal appropriation of $591 million in FY 2002, of which $575 million was for formula grants to states, including $70 million set aside specifically for English literacy and civic education programs. The vast majority (82.5 percent) of each state's grant must be distributed to local programs through a competitive process; the remainder goes towards state administration and technical assistance. States must match their federal grant at a one-to-four ratio. Most states provide only the bare minimum match, but a few states (e.g., California, Michigan, and New York) substantially overmatch.

Historically considered an education program, AEFLA is administered by the Office of Adult and Vocational Education in the U.S. Department of Education. In the last 10 years, some policymakers have recommended that the program be moved to the U.S.

Department of Labor, which administers several other titles of WIA. While AEFLA remains a part of the Department of Education, its removal from ESEA and placement in WIA and the inclusion of labor market outcomes as part of its performance indicators has increased its emphasis on workforce preparation.

AEFLA funds are distributed to states through a formula based on the number of people in each state aged 16-61 without a high school diploma or its equivalent and not enrolled in high school. States designate a specific agency to administer the program, usually the state education agency or the agency responsible for community colleges. The state agency makes AEFLA grants to local programs that can be operated by a diverse set of entities, including school districts, colleges, WIA-funded One-Stop customer service centers, vocational centers, libraries, nonprofit community-based organizations (including faith-based groups), and volunteer agencies. AEFLA requires each state to provide all of these different kinds of entities with "direct and equitable access" to grants, a provision added because of past allegations of favoritism towards public school systems. With a limited amount of funds, there is considerable pressure—both political and programmatic—on state agencies to make many small grants spread throughout their states.

Programs offer one of three types of services: adult education and literacy programs, including workplace literacy services; family literacy services, which can serve both parents and young children; and/or English literacy programs. Programs that receive funds must participate in the National Reporting System, which was added during the 1998 reauthorization.

States are held accountable for meeting performance targets on core indicators. The indicators are listed in the law, and each state negotiates with the U.S. Department of Education to set its performance targets. This performance information is then used by the state to evaluate the effectiveness of local programs.[6] In the last annual report to Congress on AEFLA, for program year 1999-2000, the U.S. Department of Education reported that, on average, 41 states exceeded their performance targets for percentages of learners demonstrating improved literacy skills. But in an appendix to the report, the Department noted, "many states were especially conservative in setting the performance projections AEFLA mandates."[7]

The adult education needs in the U.S. are substantial, but there are too few quality programs to meet them.[8] The 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey (which is currently being updated) found that 25 percent of adults over age 16 scored in the lowest of five levels of literacy.[9] It is estimated that 20 percent of adults read at or below the fifth-

grade level.[10] According to the American Management Association's annual survey on workplace testing, in 1999 over 38 percent of job applicants tested for basic skills lacked the necessary reading, writing, and math skills to do the jobs they sought.[11]

In 2000-2001, about 2.7 million people participated in adult education programs supported in part with federal funds: approximately one million were enrolled in basic literacy programs, which may include family and workplace literacy; 1.1 million in English as a second language (ESL) programs; and 600,000 in high school completion or GED programs.[12] More students participated in ESL classes—38 percent of total participants in 2002—than any other type of instructional program.[13] Many participants (over 41 percent) were youth, aged 16-24. A majority of all participants were from minority groups: 38 percent Hispanic, 21 percent African American, 8 percent Asian/Pacific Islander; and 2 percent American Indian or Alaskan Native. About 54 percent were female. Experts estimate that 50 percent of adult education students are people with learning disabilities.[14] In 1999-2000, over 239,000 participants in adult education programs were adults in correctional facilities.[15]

Some adult education programs—particularly those serving ESL students—are overcrowded and have long waiting lists. Some use lotteries to select participants. Most adult education instructors either work part-time (47 percent) or are volunteers (39 percent). About 14 percent are full-time instructors. Such staffing patterns allow programs to serve more people at a lower cost. However, such a heavy reliance on part-time and volunteer instructors can affect program quality and stability.

How Is the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Related to Disconnected Youth?

Because nearly half of adult education participants are youth, the AEFLA could be an important pathway for disconnected youth to reconnect with educational institutions. Performance data from the program demonstrates that for some students—adults as well as youth—adult education leads to a GED; for a smaller group, it leads to further education and training; and some participants experience positive employment outcomes.[16] However, high attrition and a correspondingly small number of hours of instruction severely limit the impact of adult education services. Evidence from evaluations of youth employment and welfare-to-work programs suggests that adult education programs of sufficient intensity and duration, especially if integrated with occupational training, can increase hours of instruction, GED attainment, and access to further education or training. For those who increase their literacy skills, obtain a

GED, or participate in training, adult education leads to economic gains for low-income women[17] and youth.[18]

Over One Million Youth in Adult Education

Close to six million people aged 18-29 lack a high school diploma or a GED.[19] At the same time, 1.1 million youth participate in adult education programs.[20] GEDs are often viewed by school dropouts as the way to complete their secondary educations and to gain access to higher education and better paying jobs. Adult education programs relate to various groups of disconnected youth in somewhat different ways.

School Dropouts

Research shows that school dropout rates may be creeping upward. Despite variations and inaccuracies in much reporting on school dropouts, experts believe that 25-30 percent of adults aged 18-29 have either dropped out of school—or are immigrants who have never attended school (although these two groups may face very different employment issues).[21] Approximately 18 percent of dropouts have failed to complete any years of schooling beyond the 8th grade.[22] Males drop out more than females.[23] While high school completion rates have been steady for 30 years, during the 1990s the proportion of young people earning a regular diploma declined to 75 percent and the proportion earning a GED or other credential increased to 10 percent.[24] Youth that get GEDs have often not been counted as dropouts but as high school graduates for state or federal accountability purposes.

In addition, some critics allege that the use of high-stakes testing and accountability measures for students, schools, and districts as part of standards-based reform initiatives may cause many students to drop out of school or to be "pushed out." Others charge that large, impersonal, low-quality comprehensive high schools lead to dropping out. No matter what the causes or true numbers are, all school dropouts need access to high-quality adult education programs, in a variety of settings, in order to continue their education.

AEFLA is intended to serve those who have dropped out of school. The law establishes that students are not eligible to participate until they are at least 16 years old and beyond the age set by their state's compulsory attendance law. AEFLA participants also must not be enrolled in secondary schools. In many states, if AEFLA participants achieve high school diplomas or GEDs they are counted as "graduates" for the purpose of computing graduation or school completion rates in the public K-12 system. Without getting into the issue of the relative value of GEDs when compared to high

diplomas, distinguishing between the two when collecting data would seem to be a good idea. The American Council on Education (ACE), which operates the GED service, reports that one out of every seven high school diplomas issued each year in the United States is based on passing the GED tests.[25]

Documentation within a state and school district of who gets a regular diploma and who gets a GED—and whether the GED was achieved as a result of participation in an AEFLA program or a public high school—is murky at best. A new federal requirement contained in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act that high schools use graduation rates as part of their accountability systems may lead to more precise and comparable data.

Many within the adult education community believe it would only be fair if local, state, and federal funds, such as Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (reauthorized in the NCLB Act) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), "followed" students who left regular high schools and enrolled in adult education programs.[26] While the concept of funding that "follows the student" from public K-12 schools into adult basic education programs may hold attraction, there are numerous challenges inherent in implementation. For example, there are currently no attendance requirements in adult education. Prorating costs on a weekly basis would be too burdensome, but at least one expert believes it might be possible to create a mechanism by which a certain amount of funds could be transferred from the public school system to an adult education program for each young adult student who either makes a specified amount of progress on statewide assessments or earns a diploma/GED.

An important issue for low-performing high school dropouts, English language learners, and other program participants is the quality of adult education programs. Experts believe significant improvement is needed in curricula, staff training, assessment of adult learners, and the installation and maintenance of accountability systems.[27] Assessment instruments that quickly and accurately measure initial learner needs and learning gains in a real-life context are needed, not just standardized tests.[28] Technology is another crucial issue. Many adult education programs are poorly equipped, instructors lack sufficient training and experience in the use of technology, and there is little high-quality content on the Internet for people with low literacy levels.[29]

English Language Learners

English language learners (ELLs) are the fastest growing group using adult education programs. The 2000 Census shows that, in 20 percent of households, a language

other than English is spoken.[30] A recent survey found that 40 percent of Hispanic adults living in the U.S. have not learned English, but their children primarily use English or are bilingual.[31] In 1995, ELLs were almost twice as likely to drop out of high school as fully English-proficient students.[32] Many immigrants arriving as youth have not received high school diplomas in their native countries.[33] Almost 40 percent of foreign-born 18- to 29-year-olds arriving in the U.S. during the past five years hold neither a regular high school diploma nor a GED certificate.[34] Most ELLs are highly motivated to learn English but frequently must join waiting lists before entering an adult education classroom.

Youth with Disabilities

Youth with disabilities drop out of high school at twice the rate of students without disabilities,[35] and dropout rates for students with severe disabilities are even higher.[36] As a result, many adult education students have some form of disability—estimates are as high as 50 percent.

The recent report of the President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education complained strongly about the lack of coordination between the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs and its Office of Vocational and Adult Education. While hesitating to label this a statutory or regulatory problem, the Commission noted that because the AEFLA limits adult education to individuals who are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in a secondary school, secondary school students with disabilities are prevented from receiving both adult education services and simultaneous special education support services under IDEA. This means a student cannot be enrolled in both a secondary school and an adult education program even if his or her individualized education program (IEP) team determined it was appropriate.[37] When might this be a problem? Say an 18-year-old boy has been identified as dyslexic and provided with an IEP by the public schools. His high school does not have expertise teaching reading to young adults with severe dyslexia, but there is a high-quality adult education program in the area that has a good reading program geared for adult disabled readers. In order to attend the adult education program, the student would have to drop out of high school, thus losing all the other academic and support services he is due through his IEP.

Young Parents

A statutory goal of the AEFLA is to assist parents in gaining the skills needed to support the educational development of their children. This is especially important for young women who, though less likely to drop out of school than male youth, are more

likely to do so because of pregnancy and parenting responsibilities. Adult educators emphasize that the single greatest predictor of any child's educational success is the educational attainment of the mother and that patterns of literacy, illiteracy, and under-education are intergenerational. They call funds spent on two-generation literacy programs "double duty dollars." They also point out that Section 1118 of the NCLB Act calls on parents to take on specific responsibilities concerning the education of their children and that these duties cannot be carried out without basic educational skills.[38] While an AEFLA goal is to engage parents, there are no data reported regarding how many participants are parents, nor how many are young parents under age 25.

One adult education researcher/advocate maintains that focusing on the "intergenerational transfer of cognitive skills and functional context education" is an important way to improve education attainment of children because of the predictive value of the mother's education level. He recommends refocusing some Head Start and Title I funds to family literacy programs like Even Start and adult education programs that provide education services for both parents and their children.[39]

While no one quarrels with the evidence of a correlation between a mother's education level and her children's educational attainment, there are disagreements about the effectiveness of various interventions. Evaluations have found that mothers who participate in adult education programs report spending more time in positive interaction with their children, including helping them with homework and reading to them.[40]

However, according to the U.S. Department of Education, four-year evaluations of Even Start have shown less-than-encouraging results: although children and adults participating in Even Start generally made gains in literacy skills, the gains were not significantly greater than those of non-participants.[41] Other studies that have looked specifically at family literacy programs judged to be of high quality and intensity have found stronger effects on both parents and children.[42]

Researchers who have been examining the reason for flat reading scores among the nation's children are beginning to conclude that critical pre-reading and early reading skills are learned in the home, rather than in school, and that the relatively low-level literacy skills of young, low-income mothers significantly contribute to the poor reading performance of their children.[43] In addition, research is also finding that investment in high-quality preschool programs can successfully reverse this pattern.[44]

Incarcerated Youth

While 2000 Census data are not yet available, the 1990 Census reported that almost 327,000 18- to 24-year-olds were in penal institutions, many in jails or prisons. Ninety percent were male. These numbers probably increased significantly during the 1990s.[45] Experts estimate that, by age 25, 45 percent of severely disconnected young men are incarcerated.[46] A 1992 study found that two-thirds of prison inmates lacked a regular high school diploma and only 17 percent had a GED.[47]

While the youth prison population is probably expanding, educational opportunities for incarcerated youth are probably declining. When WIA was created in 1998, a stand-alone prison literacy program was repealed, and the previous 10 percent *floor* for corrections education in the Adult Education Act was replaced with a *ceiling* of 10 percent under AEFLA. This happened in spite of research that showed that education interventions and gains for prisoners result in less recidivism.[48] For juveniles in particular, the research is limited, but the few available studies suggest significant reduction in recidivism. One county study, for example, found that recidivism for juveniles was reduced by 20 percent or more due to participation in intensive reading programs.[49]

What Are the Opportunities in the Reauthorization of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act?

Inadequate resources create a major challenge for better serving youth—and all potential students—through AEFLA programs. As one observer commented, adult education is not understood or valued and thus lacks support from both policy-makers and the general public. Severe under-funding means a lack of resources to expand programs into a variety of settings, eliminate waiting lists, hire better qualified staff, and undertake needed staff development training. In addition, WIA performance measures may promote "creaming" in adult education programs—that is, selecting students for admission who are most likely to complete a program successfully.[50]

While increased appropriations and an increased state match would go a long way towards increasing the capacity and quality of AEFLA programs, there are other opportunities to strengthen its services for youth when it is reauthorized by the 108th Congress:[51]

- Amend the state plan section of AEFLA to better focus on youth issues:
  - AEFLA currently requires states to develop a strategy for serving specific populations, such as individuals with disabilities. "Disconnected youth" should be explicitly added as one of AEFLA's priority populations.
  - Require that the state plan peer review process focus on quality of services and include individuals knowledgeable about youth development and education issues. Also require the Department of Education to utilize a peer review process in negotiating performance levels, including levels for youth. Peer review of state plans is now standard procedure with federal elementary and secondary education programs and is widely considered to have increased the quality of plan reviews and pressure on the states to take program requirements more seriously.
- Ensure that the core indicators of performance in AEFLA are compatible with the needs and goals of youth in adult education programs. At a minimum, continue to include increases in academic skills, attaining a GED or high school diploma, and transitioning on to further education and training as indicators for youth.
- Ensure that the performance measures under Title I of WIA, the adult job-training program, allow for educational improvements to count as positive outcomes for youth through age 24.
- Integrate training and adult education for youth:
  - Allow programs that integrate job training and adult education for youth, and receive both Title I and Title II funding, to report on just one set of performance measures. Too few programs currently achieve this integration despite research showing integrated services can be more effective than either service alone. One barrier to expanding these services is that programs that receive both adult education and youth training funding under WIA face two sets of performance measures and program requirements. As an incentive to spur creation of more integrated programs, Congress should consider allowing such programs to report on just one set of performance measures.

- Require states to report the number of integrated job training and adult education programs funded through contracts under Title II or certified as eligible providers under Title I. Simply tracking this information over time will allow the federal government to better gauge the capacity of the field to provide these services and to see whether incentives to create more integrated programs are having an effect.
- Use WIA funds reserved at the state and national levels as seed money to create more integrated adult education and job training programs that prepare youth for specific occupations and for further postsecondary education along a career ladder.

- In order to better understand who is being served by AEFLA and the impact of AEFLA-supported services on youth, require federal data reporting on the parenting status of participants and break down the outcome data (e.g., received a GED, got a job, went on to further education or training) by age group.
- Better coordinate federal elementary and secondary education programs with AEFLA:
  - Amend AEFLA to allow disabled secondary school students between the ages of 16 and 21 to be enrolled simultaneously in secondary school and adult education, if their Individual Education Plan calls for such an arrangement. Require the secondary school to include the co-enrolled student in any assessment and reporting required for accountability purposes.
  - Amend AEFLA to clarify that it is allowable for federal funds from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, especially Title I, and IDEA to follow youth ages 16-21 who leave high school and enroll in adult education programs. Require the school district and adult education provider to enter into a written agreement that details how the funds will be used to accomplish the goals of Title I and IDEA and how the adult education provider will be held accountable for achieving these goals.
- AEFLA should direct the National Institute for Literacy and the U.S. Department of Education to use a portion of their national leadership funds to support research on reading development and instruc-

tion with youth, including youth with learning disabilities. The research should include teacher preparation, curriculum development, and effective student/teacher ratios. This work should be coordinated with the research on reading development in adults currently being carried out by the Institute of Education Sciences at the U.S. Department of Education.

- Amend AEFLA to allow states to exceed the current 10 percent cap on corrections education.

Conclusion

It is imperative that this nation provides a strong path for disconnected youth who choose to reconnect with mainstream institutions and to prepare themselves through education and training for productive, contributing lives. Today that path is too narrow and so uneven that few can find their way and fully benefit. Because of underfunding of adult education and related programs, the system of universal public education in the U.S. does not exist for youth who leave high schools, whether they want to reconnect or not.

The Higher Education Act and Disconnected Youth

By Thomas R. Wolanin

Overview

Postsecondary education offers disconnected youth a route to self-sufficiency as adults. However, postsecondary education in the United States is not free, and disconnected youth face great financial (and other) barriers to this important stepping-stone to success. The Higher Education Act (HEA) is the main federal source for financial aid for postsecondary education, making $55.5 billion available to 8.4 million students in the 2002-2003 school year. While HEA has not traditionally been thought of as a program for disconnected youth (few of whom are considered typical "college material"), HEA can help them access job training opportunities as well as degree programs at both two- and four-year institutions.

Reauthorization of HEA during the 108th Congress offers the opportunity to increase access to postsecondary education for disconnected youth, both by making HEA-funded programs more "friendly" for disconnected youth and by expanding the reach of HEA financial aid. Without ready access to postsecondary education, disconnected youth are much less likely to compete successfully in labor market. This chapter briefly describes HEA, explains its link to disconnected youth, and outlines a number of opportunities for improving HEA during reauthorization. It concludes with a summary of recommendations. HEA expires September 30, 2004; while Congress has begun to hold hearings related to reauthorization, it is generally anticipated that action will occur sometime in 2004.

What is the Higher Education Act?

HEA contains more than fifty programs, the oldest of which were enacted in the National Defense Education Act of 1958. These programs are primarily directed at assisting individuals in overcoming barriers to access and retention in postsecondary education. Most of the available funds and most of the programs provide *financial* aid to students attending postsecondary education. In the 2002-2003 school year, the HEA student financial aid programs made $55.5 billion available to 8.4 million students and more than a half million families, who borrowed to pay for the higher education expenses of their dependent children.[1] In addition to addressing financial barriers through the financial aid program, HEA also deals with *cultural* and *academic* barriers to access and retention. For example, the Upward Bound program provides tutoring and mentoring to low-income high school students to motivate them toward education beyond high school as well as to improve their academic qualifications for higher education. Title II seeks to increase the supply and quality of K-12 teachers with the aim of improving the education of students in elementary and secondary education and their readiness for postsecondary education.

How Is the Higher Education Act Related to Disconnected Youth?

Youth ages 16-24 are generally thought of as the prime population of those who are in higher education or who are preparing to enter in the near future, and, indeed, that is the case for the majority in this age group. However, nearly 3 million youth are out of school and out of work and isolated from the mainstream of American society.[2] In addition, a sizable number of youth are at-risk of becoming disconnected (see the Introduction). Disconnected youth represent a substantial wasted or underdeveloped human resource that could add to our economic prosperity and to the quality of our social, cultural, and political life. They are a significant drain on the nation as they often engage in both socially harmful and self-destructive behavior and consume disproportionate amounts of expensive public services. Finally, they are a moral challenge to the nation. Bringing them into full participation in the nation would realize the American ideals of fairness and equal opportunity.

Disconnected youth are not usually thought of as "college material." However, HEA serves students in all of postsecondary education. This includes students at about 6,400 "Title IV-eligible" institutions in the United States whose students may receive

financial aid through HEA programs.[3] About 1,500 of these institutions are two-year public community colleges, which enroll 37 percent of all students, and about 2,300 of these institutions are proprietary schools, which enroll 4 percent of all students.[4] The community colleges and proprietary schools offer relatively short courses of six months to two years in a very wide range of fields, including construction trades, health professions, information technology, and cosmetology. While relatively few disconnected youth are likely to be candidates for highly selective colleges, substantial numbers of them could benefit from the job training opportunities available in postsecondary education, as well as its academic degree programs. This is particularly true of the 40 percent of them who have a high school diploma or its equivalent, which is a key qualification for participation in higher education.[5] For all disconnected youth, after age 24, lack of postsecondary education makes it much less likely that they will participate in the workforce. They are more likely to remain disconnected.[6]

Disconnected youth are often low-income and, therefore, generally lack the personal resources to pay for postsecondary education. While there is no free postsecondary education in the United States, public community colleges generally have the lowest costs. However, the annual cost of attendance (including living expenses)—even at these institutions—averaged $10,458 for a full-time commuter student in 2002-2003, far beyond the ability to pay of most disconnected youth.[7] Therefore, adequate levels of financial aid are critical for disconnected youth to be able to participate in postsecondary education, especially the most severely disconnected youth. According to Wald and Martinez, 65 percent of them lack a high school diploma or its equivalent.[8] Thirty percent of male disconnected youth are incarcerated.[9] Thirty-seven percent of female disconnected youth live with one or more of their minor children.[10] Twelve percent of disconnected youth are foreign born.[11] These subpopulations also need to be served by HEA programs.

What Are the Opportunities to Improve HEA for Disconnected Youth During Reauthorization?

HEA is scheduled to be reauthorized during the 108th Congress. This reauthorization will provide an opportunity to expand access to postsecondary education for disconnected youth.

Increase Funding

The single most important policy that Congress should consider in reauthorizing HEA is to provide adequate levels of financial aid to disconnected youth. Currently, financial aid provided through HEA and other sources is insufficient for low-income youth who are academically qualified. The Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance found that, on average, the lowest income students face $3,200 of unmet need at public two-year institutions and $3,800 of unmet need at four-year public institutions.[12] Unmet need is the difference between the cost of attendance at an institution of higher education and the amount of resources available to an individual from personal income and assets, family income and assets, and financial aid (grants and loans) from federal, state, institutional, and other sources. As a result of this unmet need, it is estimated that 406,000 college-qualified high school graduates from low- and moderate-income families will be prevented from enrolling in a four-year college per year, and 168,000 of them will be unable to enroll in any college at all within two years of graduation.[13] Others will work an excessive number of hours or attend less than full time, significantly increasing the risk that they will not persist to completion of their program.[14] Those excluded from postsecondary education by unmet financial need must certainly include a substantial number of the nearly 40 percent of disconnected youth who have a high school diploma or its equivalent and who are low income.

Grants are the most effective form of student financial aid. Low-income students who receive grants are more likely to go to college than low-income students who receive other forms of aid, particularly loans.[15] The grant programs in HEA, especially the Pell Grant, are the largest source of need-based grants awarded to low-income students. Pell Grants totaled $11.6 billion in the 2002-2003 school year.[16] However, the purchasing power of the Pell Grant has been significantly eroded in the last 25 years. For example, in the 1975-76 school year, the maximum Pell Grant paid for about 85 percent of the cost of attendance at a public four-year institution; by the 2001-2002 school year, the maximum Pell Grant paid for only about 40 percent of the cost of attendance at a four-year public institution—a loss of more than half of its purchasing power. To maintain pace with inflation, the maximum Pell Grant for an in-state commuter student at a four-year public institution would need to be $11,000 rather than its current maximum of $4,000.[17] Therefore, Congress should consider a substantial increase in the maximum Pell Grant to eliminate the unmet need faced by low-income students and to restore the Pell Grant's purchas-

ing power. The 44 organizations whose recommendations for reauthorizing HEA were coordinated by the American Council on Education recommend that Congress "make a firm commitment to doubling the appropriated Pell Grant maximum award within a six-year time frame that coincides with the passage of the reauthorization legislation."[18]

They make this recommendation because simply providing for increases in the *authorized* Pell Grant maximum is unlikely to restore the purchasing power of the Pell Grant. In the 30 years of the program, the maximum Pell Grant provided for in the annual appropriations has matched the authorized Pell Grant maximum only three times, most recently for the 1979-80 school year.[19] Therefore, Congress should consider ensuring the funding for the Pell Grant.[20] If funding for Pell Grants was mandatory, annual appropriations from Congress would be non-discretionary at the levels provided in the law as long as the law remained on the books. This would also make the funding of the program much more secure and predictable, thereby signaling to potential low-income students that funds for their higher education will in fact be available.[21]

Those disconnected youth who succeed in finding their way into postsecondary education usually do so with the help of HEA financial assistance as well as their own earnings. However, as these students work, their eligibility for student aid decreases when their income increases. This "work penalty" is one aspect of federal student financial aid that does not well serve the needs of working students. Congress should review the need analysis system to enable it to more effectively serve students who must balance work and school.[22]

While grants are the best form of financial aid for low-income students, loans have become the largest source of financial aid from HEA, providing $40 billion in the 2002-2003 school year.[23] The annual loan limits, especially for first-year students, have not kept pace with increases in higher education prices. The annual loan limit for first-year independent students is $6,625, and for first-year dependent students $2,625. These annual limits were established in 1986. The annual loan limit for first-year dependent students, $2,625, is also virtually unchanged from the $2,500 level at which it was set in 1972, 30 years ago. Average tuition and fees in public four-year, public two-year, and private four-year institutions increased by about 300 percent between 1986-87 and 2001-02, while the annual loan limits for

first-year students increased by zero percent. Since 1972-73, average tuition and fees have increased in excess of 900 percent.[24] Therefore, Congress should consider significant increases in loan limits, particularly for first-year students.

In addition to financing access to higher education, HEA also funds outreach programs to link disconnected youth to preparation for postsecondary education and to appropriate postsecondary educational opportunities. The most important of these programs is Talent Search, which aims "to identify qualified youths with potential for education at the postsecondary level and to encourage such youths to complete secondary school and to undertake a program of postsecondary education."[25] Talent Search programs provide a spectrum of services, including assistance in secondary school reentry, entry to GED programs, assistance in completing college admission and financial aid applications, personal and career counseling, and academic tutorials. Many Talent Search programs are conducted by community-based organizations, such as Kentuckiana Metroversity in Louisville, Kentucky; The Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Ft. Worth, Texas; and Harlem Center for Education in New York.[26] More than 300,000 persons are served in 361 Talent Search programs.[27] Educational Opportunity Centers are also authorized by HEA, and they provide similar services to Talent Search Programs at 82 Centers, which serve more than 150,000 persons. However, it is estimated that the Talent Search programs and Educational Opportunity Centers reach only about 10 percent of those eligible for services.[28] Reaching more of those in need of services, including disconnected youth, is an appropriations rather than a reauthorization issue. However, a well-developed program model and infrastructure exists in HEA.

Revise Policies That Restrict Access to Disconnected Youth

One feature of HEA discourages institutions of higher education from serving disconnected youth and other high-risk low-income populations. Student loan defaults are primarily measured in HEA by the cohort default rate, the percentage of borrowers who enter repayment in a fiscal year and default by the end of the next fiscal year. Institutions of higher education with cohort default rates of 25 percent or more for three consecutive years are excluded from HEA student financial aid programs. Coming from a low-income background and being unemployed are crucial factors that raise the likelihood that a borrower will default.[29] Given the inadequacy of grant assistance, many students from these high-risk backgrounds must borrow to pay the costs of higher education, but institutions of

higher education have a disincentive to serve these populations, including disconnected youth, lest they put at risk their eligibility to participate in the student aid programs. Congress should consider alternative measures to determine institutional eligibility that do not discourage the enrollment of disconnected youth and other low-income students.

Sixty-five percent of disconnected youth lack a high school diploma or its equivalent.[30] They are not necessarily excluded from access to financial aid to attend college, however. HEA provides an alternative route to eligibility for financial aid to persons who are not high school graduates. They are eligible if they can achieve a score specified by the Secretary of Education on an independently administered examination demonstrating that they "can benefit from the education or training being offered."[31] This alternative route to student aid eligibility can be of particular use to disconnected youth, many of whom are not high school graduates. The National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) has recommended that, in addition, persons who have completed at least six units of college courses that are applicable toward a degree or certificate with a grade of C or better be deemed to have the ability to benefit from higher education. NASFAA notes that recent research indicates "that students who do not have a high school diploma or its equivalent but who pass at least six units of college courses have grades and retention rates that are equal to or higher than students with high school diplomas."[32] Congress should consider enacting this provision to provide yet another appropriate avenue into postsecondary education for those lacking a high school diploma.

Thirty percent of disconnected males are incarcerated.[33] Numerous studies have shown that prisoner participation in postsecondary education provides skills that help them succeed outside of prison, substantially reduces recidivism rates, and is a significant deterrent to future crime. Prior to 1994, postsecondary institutions, including a number of community colleges and proprietary schools, offered programs for prisoners. The prisoners paid the tuition and fees and purchased books and supplies with Pell Grants for which they qualified as low-income individuals. The Violent Crime Control Act of 1994 amended HEA to deny Pell Grant eligibility "to any individual who is incarcerated in any Federal or State penal institution."[34] This resulted in a substantial narrowing of the postsecondary educational opportunities available to prisoners, including those who are disconnected youth. Congress should consider restoring Pell Grant eligibility for prisoners.

Another HEA provision that probably has a disproportionate impact on disconnected youth is the "Suspension of Eligibility for Drug-Related Offenses," enacted in 1998.[35] Depending on whether the drug offense is possession or sale and whether it is a first, second, or third offense, eligibility for financial aid is denied for either one or two years or indefinitely. This provision is a short-sighted and unfair penalty levied on those who have already paid the penalty imposed by the criminal justice system. It is estimated that at least 75,000 applicants have been denied federal student aid by this provision, in addition to the persons who were discouraged from applying because of the existence of the ban.[36] Congress should consider repealing this provision.[37]

Expand and Improve Child Care for HEA Recipients

Thirty-seven percent of disconnected female youth live with one or more of their minor children.[38] The availability of child care is clearly critical for this subpopulation of disconnected youth to have access to higher education. Four provisions of HEA deal with providing child care to low-income students and to improving the quality of child care.

First, HEA has long included in determining a student's cost of attendance "an allowance based on actual expenses incurred for dependent care."[39] This means that funds from HEA student aid programs can be used to pay for dependent care for periods that include "class-time, study-time, field work, internships and commuting time."[40]

Second, the Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CHAMPS) program authorizes four-year grants to institutions of higher education "to support the participation of low-income parents in postsecondary education through provision of campus-based child care services."[41] Institutions can use the funds "to support or establish a campus-based child care program primarily serving the needs of low-income students enrolled at the institution ... [and] ... to provide before and after school services to the extent necessary to enable low-income students enrolled at the institution of higher education to pursue postsecondary education."[42] In FYs 2001 and 2002, $25 million was appropriated for the program; however, program funding was reduced to $16.2 million in FY 2003. This program clearly has the potential to expand the availability of child care for disconnected youth who become students. Congress should consider extending and expanding this program, with particular attention to making it easier for colleges and universities to

access all of the available funds. While there are other funds available for child care, notably the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), these funds only serve one of seven eligible children.[43] States have flexibility under federal CCDBG law to set the specific requirements for eligibility for child care assistance, and a number of states do not allow TANF-receiving (seven states) or low-income families (five states) to receive child care assistance to attend college. Among states that do allow child care assistance for college, many have other restrictions, such as a required number of work hours in addition to school or a time limit on how long families may use child care assistance and attend college.[44] As states have encountered growing fiscal crises in recent years, some have indicated that families who need child care to attend college are less prioritized than working families.[45]

Third, the Federal Work-Study program includes a requirement that the institution of higher education administering the program "use at least 7 percent of the total amount of funds granted to such institution ... to compensate students employed in community service."[46] Contained in the definition of "community service" is "child care (including child care services provided on campus that are open and accessible to the community)."[47] This definition has been construed to prohibit community service employment by work-study students in child care facilities that serve only the students and employees of the institution of higher education. NASFAA recommends that this limitation in meeting the 7 percent community service requirement be eliminated.[48] The result would likely be an expansion of campus-based child care services for students, including disconnected youth who become students. Congress should consider adopting this recommendation.

Fourth, the "Loan Forgiveness for Child Care Providers" provisions of HEA are intended "to bring more highly trained individuals into the early child care profession; and ... to keep more highly trained child care providers in the early child care field for longer periods of time."[49] To attain these objectives, cancellation of up to 100 percent of Stafford and Direct Loans is offered over five years to those employed in child care facilities in low-income communities.[50] If this loan cancellation were broadly available, it could significantly expand the availability and the quality of child care in low-income communities, including child care for disconnected youth who want to pursue education, training, or employment. Unfortunately, the provisions, as written, cannot deliver on their promise. As a discretionary program, loan forgiveness provisions received an appropriation of only $1

million in FY 2002, far too little to substantially affect the supply or the quality of child care personnel. More importantly, current law provides that funds be awarded to those eligible for loan forgiveness "on a first-come, first-served basis and subject to the availability of appropriations."[51] Thus, there is no rational basis for a student to pursue a program of study in early childhood education or to plan a career as a child care provider in anticipation of having his or her loans cancelled. There is no certainty or guarantee that the loans will, in fact, be cancelled. This provision can only have its intended effect if the loan cancellation benefits are an entitlement like other benefits in the student loan programs, such as the in-school interest subsidy for low-income students and the payment for defaults. With entitlement funding, a student who modified his or her course of study or career plans to take advantage of loan cancellation would be assured that the cancellation would be a reality and not an empty promise.

Revise Polices Related to Disconnected Youth Who Are Foreign-Born

Twelve percent of disconnected youth are foreign born.[52] Presumably, many of these youth are non-citizens or undocumented. HEA denies student financial aid to those who are not citizens or otherwise "in the United States for other than a temporary purpose with the intention of becoming a citizen or permanent resident."[53] By federal law, undocumented children cannot be excluded from public elementary and secondary schools.[54] However, denying these same persons access to federal student financial aid effectively excludes many of them from postsecondary education and diminishes their capacity to be contributors to this country. H.R. 1582, introduced in the 107th Congress, would allow undocumented youth who entered the United States before age 16 and who lived in the country for at least five consecutive years before age 25 to be granted permanent resident status, which would make them eligible for student financial assistance through HEA programs. The requirements of H.R. 1582 would limit its benefits primarily to youth who were brought to this country as children by their parents and who were therefore not themselves willful violators of U.S. immigration laws. In addition, these requirements would seem to ensure that those who benefited had a significant attachment to the U.S. and a high likelihood of remaining in the country permanently. Congress should consider adopting the conditions specified in H.R. 1582 for purposes of student eligibility for HEA financial aid programs.

Summary of Recommendations

Funding

The single most important policy that Congress should consider in reauthorizing HEA is to provide adequate levels of financial aid to disconnected youth who want to attend postsecondary education:

- Congress should substantially increase the maximum Pell Grant to eliminate the unmet need faced by low-income students and to restore the Pell Grant's purchasing power.
- Congress should ensure the funding for the Pell Grant at the level specified in the law by making the program non-discretionary.
- Congress should significantly increase loan limits, particularly for first-year students.
- Congress should increase appropriations for the Talent Search programs and Educational Opportunity Centers, which currently reach only about 10 percent of those eligible for services.

Access

In order to improve access by disconnected youth:

- Congress should adopt alternative measures to determine institutional eligibility that do not discourage the enrollment of disconnected youth and other low-income students—rather than relying solely on student loan default rates.
- Congress should enact a provision, recommended by the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA), that persons who have completed at least six units of college courses that are applicable toward a degree or certificate with a grade of C or better be deemed to have the ability to benefit from higher education.
- Congress should restore Pell Grant eligibility for prisoners.
- Congress should repeal the "Suspension of Eligibility for Drug-Related Offenses" provisions enacted in 1998.
- Congress should adopt the provisions of H.R. 1582, introduced in the 107th Congress, which would allow undocumented youth who entered the United States before age 16 and who lived in the country

for at least five consecutive years before age 25 to be granted permanent resident status, which would make them eligible for student financial assistance through HEA programs.

Child Care

Three provisions of HEA deal with providing child care to low-income students and to improving the quality of child care should be addressed:

- Congress should extend and expand the Child Care Access Means Parents in School program, which authorizes four-year grants to institutions of higher education "to support the participation of low-income parents in postsecondary education through provision of campus-based child care services."
- Congress should adopt the NASFAA recommendation that limitations in the Federal Work-Study program on using funds for employment by work-study students in on-campus child care facilities be eliminated.
- Congress should modify the "Loan Forgiveness for Child Care Providers" provisions so that the loan cancellation benefits are an entitlement like other benefits in the student loan programs.

Conclusion

Postsecondary education is the best pathway for at-risk and disconnected youth to reach successful and self-sufficient adulthood. In the reauthorization of HEA, Congress has the opportunity to put the dream of quality education and training within the reach of these youth by expanding HEA programs through increased funding, revising current policies that restrict access for disconnected youth, and expanding and improving child care for HEA recipients.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Disconnected Youth

By Cynthia G. Brown and Jennifer Mezey

Overview

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a law that supports education and related services for children and youth with disabilities in two ways. First, IDEA is a civil rights law that guarantees to students with disabilities the right to a public school education in (to the greatest extent possible) an integrated setting with students without disabilities.[1] Second, IDEA is a federal grant program, providing approximately $10 billion in FY 2003 to states and localities to fund education and related services for children and youth with disabilities. Over $9 billion of IDEA's overall funding is distributed on a formula basis for services to children and youth ages 3-21 in public and private schools.[2]

In 1970, before IDEA was enacted, more than one million students with disabilities were excluded from public schools, and another 3.5 million did not receive appropriate services.[3] Today over six million students—virtually all those identified with a disability who have not dropped out of school—receive special education services. And now the great majority of children and youth with disabilities are educated in regular schools with non-disabled students.[4]

Disconnected youth are those who are out of school and out of work for a sustained period and are without ready access to social and family supports. Many of the youth served by IDEA are at risk of becoming disconnected because the education outcomes for youth with disabilities are far worse than those of their peers. For instance, youth with disabilities are twice as likely to drop out of school[5] and half as likely to enroll in

postsecondary institutions as youth without disabilities.[6] The risk of disconnection is particularly acute for youth with emotional disturbance and learning disabilities, many of whom have not mastered basic literacy skills. Not surprisingly, a sizeable portion of severely disconnected youth (those who are socially isolated and face major barriers to connecting to the labor force) have disabilities—an estimated 17 percent of male youth and 10 percent of female youth.[7] The effects of this disconnection persist into adulthood: the recent President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education reported that only 31 percent of adults with disabilities ages 21 through 64 are employed and that adults with disabilities earn significantly less than adults without disabilities.[8]

Therefore, IDEA has a critical role to play in improving the prospects of disconnected youth and those at risk of becoming disconnected, as its first purpose posits: "to ensure that all children with disabilities [through age 21] have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to ... *prepare them for employment and independent living*" [emphasis added].[9] An important mechanism for achieving this purpose is early identification of children with disabilities and quick intervention—something that IDEA has increasingly been criticized for not emphasizing for elementary school children who have emotional problems or learning disabilities.

However, beyond improving early identification, opportunities exist for improving IDEA services to certain at-risk populations, particularly youth with difficulty reading, youth with emotional and behavior problems, and minority youth. In addition, more could be done to ease the transition that youth make from special education into postsecondary education or employment, both by improving IDEA services and coordinating with other available programs. Finally, youth with disabilities who are school dropouts are a population that has generally not been served by IDEA.

This chapter describes IDEA generally, focuses particularly on connections between IDEA and disconnected youth and youth at-risk of becoming disconnected, and offers reauthorization recommendations for improving IDEA for these youth. As of the publication of this report, the House of Representatives has passed an IDEA reauthorization measure. On June 25, 2003 (just as this report went to press), the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee passed a reauthorization bill, S. 1248.[10]

What Is IDEA?

IDEA was initially enacted as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act in 1975. It was amended significantly in 1997, and its appropriations more than doubled in the late 1990s. These federal funds, along with state and local dollars, support special education services in virtually every public school; these funds are usually administered by a state department of education's office of special education through a unified special education program. It is estimated that $35 to $60 billion is spent annually on special education in the U.S. from federal, state, and local funds.[11]

The IDEA statute is composed of Parts A through D. Part A contains general provisions, including IDEA's findings and purposes; Part B lays out the civil rights protections for students ages 3 to 21 with disabilities and details the requirements for the use of IDEA funds to serve students with disabilities; Part C funds early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities or developmental delays or (at state option) for those who are at risk of developing disabilities; and Part D provides funding to states for infrastructure improvements, including teacher training.[12] This paper will focus largely on IDEA's Part B.

Under IDEA's Part B, states receive grants to assist them in providing special education and related services to students ages 3 to 21.[13] In the 2001-2002 school year, 5.9 million children aged 6-21 received special education and related services through IDEA.[14] That year, the five largest categories of students identified with disabilities served by IDEA were: specific learning disabled (almost half of all children served), speech or language impairments, mental retardation, emotional disturbance, and other health impairments.[15]

Although districts and schools have considerable flexibility in spending IDEA funds, there are civil rights requirements to which they must adhere to assure that each student with a disability (including students who have been suspended or expelled from school) receives a free appropriate public education (commonly referred to as FAPE).[16] The education must be provided in a way that adequately meets the student's needs in the least restrictive environment—one in which children without disabilities are also educated.[17] In practice, least restrictive environments can range from a general education classroom to a resource room to a separate school.

Under IDEA, schools have an obligation to develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for students receiving services under Part B;[18] the IEP specifies the goals and objectives set for the student and the education and related services that will be

provided to meet these goals.[19] Students with disabilities are educated and supported in numerous ways, depending on the nature of their disability, their age, and the contents of their IEP. For instance, from age 14 on, IEPs must include an annually updated statement of the postsecondary transition needs of youth with disabilities.[20]

IDEA was significantly modified in 1997. The changes aligned IDEA with the standards-based framework for education established in 1994 federal legislation: Goals 2000 and amendments to Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Title I is a source of federal funds for local education agencies to improve instruction in high-poverty schools.

The 1997 amendments included new provisions designed to enhance the integration of students with disabilities into general education and to increase parental participation in the evaluation and IEP processes. Of particular import for youth were enhancements to the postsecondary transition planning process (i.e., starting the planning earlier). In addition, the amendments changed IDEA's discipline procedures. Schools were given greater authority to remove students with disabilities from the classroom for serious violations of school rules but were also required to review whether a disciplinary violation was the result of the student's disability and whether appropriate services had been provided to the student.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB Act), which reauthorized Title I and other programs, significantly stiffened accountability and assessment procedures and teacher quality requirements for all districts and schools in ways that directly affect students with disabilities. Schools and districts are expected to meet and report yearly progress targets in achievement for all students, including those with disabilities, and all students must ultimately be taught in core subjects by highly qualified teachers.[21]

How Is IDEA Related to Disconnected Youth?

IDEA relates to disconnected youth and youth at risk of becoming disconnected in several ways. It provides education and related services to youth with disabilities for as long as they participate in the system of public education. These youth may be in regular schools, alternative or charter schools, or private schools for which public school districts pay the cost. IDEA also provides education and related services to children, which, if effective, can prevent many youth from becoming disconnected.

In 2001-2002, about 3.1 million adolescents aged 12-21 were in special education.[22] The number receiving services does not include numerous disconnected youth with

disabilities who have dropped out of school and have not returned—although schools are responsible for identifying these youth under IDEA requirements, referred to as Child Find obligations. Also, some incarcerated youth are not included because schools are not required to provide a "free, appropriate public education" to children and youth who are incarcerated in adult facilities and have not had an IEP or were not identified as having a disability before their incarceration.[23] Many disconnected young people who are no longer in school may at one time have participated in special education programs. Others may never have been identified as having a disability and consequently got no special services while in school.

Youth with Disabilities in School

IDEA supports education and related services for the following major groups of young people at risk of becoming disconnected, yet still connected with schools.

Youth with Learning Disabilities

Children with a "specific learning disability" account for nearly half of the roughly 6 million children (ages 6-21) in special education.[24] Over the last decade, the greatest growth in the category of children with specific learning disabilities has been among students between the ages of 12 and 17.[25] The Presidential Commission on Excellence in Special Education stated that approximately 80 percent of the children and youth with learning disabilities have not learned or been taught how to read adequately. The majority of children who are poor readers at age nine or older continue to have reading difficulties into adulthood; even the best, most intensive programs do not completely address reading shortcomings of older students.[26]

Under IDEA, "specific learning disability" relates to disorders that impact on speaking, listening, writing, reading, or math skills.[27] To establish that a problem is a disorder, and not simply a lack of skills, IDEA's regulations require a finding of "severe discrepancy" between capacity and performance.[28] Further, even when a severe discrepancy is found, if it is the result of inadequate instruction, economic or cultural disadvantage, or emotional disturbance, then the child is not considered to have a "specific learning disability" and cannot receive IDEA-funded services for that condition.[29] The definition of "specific learning disability" has gained attention because some contend that it has led to under-inclusion of African American students in special education. In part, this may occur because of the exclusions described above or because the "severe discrepancy" test may inadequately identify learning-disabled African American students. States often use IQ tests to measure severe discrepancy.[30] The pending House IDEA reauthorization would establish that local educational agencies

are not required to use the severe discrepancy test in evaluating whether or not a student has a specific learning disability.[31]

Not all children with low literacy have learning disabilities. Whether a child with low literacy has a learning disability or instead suffers an instructional deficit determines which funding streams can help the child. Most IDEA Part B funds are required to be used for children and youth who have been identified as having disabilities—not those who are at risk of developing disabilities. (In contrast, IDEA Part C funds can be used for services to infants and toddlers who are at risk of developmental delay, and a set-aside for state-level administration activities within Part B can be used for different purposes.) Despite these limitations, some special education experts are proposing that IDEA funds be expended together with Title I and Reading First[32] on grades one and two "pre-referral" reading programs and teacher training in reading.[33] A provision in the pending House reauthorization legislation would give local education agencies the option to spend up to 15 percent of their IDEA funds on these types of programs.[34] Other experts are concerned that tapping IDEA Part B funds for children who do not have disabilities is problematic because funding is currently inadequate to serve those children and youth who *have* been identified as having disabilities.

Youth with Emotional and Behavioral Problems

Experts believe that a growing proportion of young people have mental health problems, with such problems particularly prevalent among the population of young mothers and juvenile offenders.[35] About 50 percent of students identified with an emotional disturbance drop out of school, the lowest completion rate for all categories of disability; an unknown number with mental health problems are never identified.[36] With the expansion of "zero tolerance" policies for school-rule violations, increasing numbers of youth with behavior problems (often triggered by poor early instruction and falling behind in literacy skills) are being "pushed out" of regular schools,[37] though not necessarily out of educational services.[38] Many students with IEPs end up in alternative schools where they are still entitled to a "free, appropriate public education" supported with IDEA dollars. However, this creates two concerns. First, current law specifies IDEA funds may be used by "charter schools" but does not enumerate the other kinds of public alternative schools that are eligible to receive IDEA funds. Second, some people fear that alternative schools (including charter schools) are not fully accessing IDEA funds for the special education services they provide to IDEA-eligible youth. Educators are increasingly interested in identifying the extent to which the latter is a problem and understanding more precisely why it is occurring.[39]

IDEA guarantees that children and youth with disabilities who are suspended or expelled for committing disciplinary violations are still entitled to a "free, appropriate public education," sometimes in alternative settings. The so-called "stay put" provision generally prohibits changing a disabled student's classroom placement[40] without both a recommendation from the IEP committee and the parents' consent while any appeal is underway.[41] (An exception to the "stay put" provision added in 1997 occurs in instances where the student brings a weapon to school or commits a drug offense). Under the "stay put" provision, the IEP team must determine whether the violation resulted from the student's disability and must address the issue through a behavioral intervention plan.

The IDEA reauthorization legislation approved by the House Education and Workforce Committee in April 2003, would expand a school's authority to move a student to an alternative setting for up to 45 days (with extensions possible) for *any* violation (not just those related to drugs and weapons) of a code of student conduct. Further, the measure does *not* require consideration of whether the violation stems from the student's disability. The provision would establish that a student must continue to receive educational services, including behavioral intervention services, in an alternative setting.[42]

Minority Youth

Disproportionate enrollment of minority youth in special education can refer to over-representation or under-representation. African American students are about three times as likely as white students to be over-represented in the mental retardation category and two times as likely to be over-represented in the emotional disturbance category. African American students with disabilities graduate at a much lower rate (44 percent) than white students with disabilities (64 percent).[43] In addition, as mentioned earlier, African Americans are under-represented in the "specific learning disability" category. Native Americans are somewhat over-represented in special education. Latino and Asian American students are sometimes under-represented, depending on the category of disability.

Research and federal surveys demonstrate that minority and low-income students receive lower quality special education services in large part because of their concentration in high-poverty urban, rural, and suburban schools and districts.[44] Minority students are also more likely to receive services in segregated settings. African American students with emotional disturbance receive many fewer hours of counseling and related services than white students with emotional disturbance.[45]

Since 1997, IDEA has required states to consider whether there is any disproportionate minority student identification or placement. States are authorized to make revisions in their local education policies and procedures where problems are found. They are not required to report on disproportionate school dropout rates, however.

Youth Transitioning from Special Education to Postsecondary Education or Employment

Once students leave IDEA, they often face programs or employers that do not provide the kinds of services the students received under IDEA.[46] Therefore, IDEA requires students, parents, schools, and other public agencies to work together to plan the transition of youth from secondary school to postsecondary school or employment. These requirements were strengthened in the 1997 amendments. Nearly all states, however, have failed to ensure compliance with transition rules, according to an analysis by the National Council on Disability.[47] The recent President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education found IDEA and its regulations confusing in their guidance to educators and parents about transition.

In 1997, Congress required schools to develop transition plans and the supports necessary to achieve these plans for youth starting at age 14 (or younger if necessary).[48] This provision added to the existing requirement that, at age 16, each student, together with his or her IEP team, must incorporate a "statement of needed transition services for the student, including, if appropriate, a statement of the interagency responsibilities or any needed linkages."[49]

To facilitate interagency transition planning, the 1997 IDEA amendments allow local educational agencies to set aside up to 5 percent of their funds for this purpose. (This set-aside would be eliminated in the pending IDEA reauthorization legislation in the House.) Regulations specifically require schools to invite representatives from any agency "likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services" to participate in the development of transition needs statements for students transitioning out of school.[50] The agencies often most relevant to IDEA students are Vocational Rehabilitation, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and Medicaid agencies.[51] Despite the language in IDEA allowing local educational agencies to use a portion of their funding to facilitate interagency coordination, the results can fall far short of the goals.

Language in the Rehabilitation Act, also up for reauthorization in the 108th Congress, is not yet fully congruent with IDEA. The Rehabilitation Act authorizes the formula grant programs of vocational rehabilitation, supported employment, independent living, and client assistance for individuals with disabilities. While the Rehabilitation Act

requires that state plans address transition services while IDEA youth are in school, agencies too often shy away from actually providing these services. Instead, these agencies often wait until IDEA students have left school. In part, this happens because other provisions in the Rehabilitation Act can discourage investment in transition services for IDEA youth. For example, one provision rewards agencies for successful job placements. Therefore, agencies might find it more advantageous to target easier-to-place adults than IDEA youth. While none of these Rehabilitation Act provisions preclude transition services to IDEA students, neither do they serve as incentives to provide such services.[52]

The Social Security Administration (SSA) is also implementing a new initiative, Ticket to Work, which has the potential to provide employment-related services and to influence transitions for 18-year-old SSI recipients. Under Ticket to Work, an SSI recipient can use his or her "ticket" to obtain vocational rehabilitation, employment, and other support services from qualified providers participating in employment networks; providers are paid based on successful employment outcomes.[53] In addition, SSA has placed staff in One-Stop customer service centers (operated by states under the Workforce Investment Act [WIA]) to help people with disabilities access training and benefits. While there may be informal linkages in some states, there are few formal statutory links between IDEA and Ticket to Work or WIA.

Youth with Disabilities Out of School

Youth with disabilities who are not in school are less likely to receive special education and related services through IDEA. Under the law, school districts have a responsibility to serve dropouts if they return to school. School districts are also required to serve youth in the juvenile justice system or incarcerated in adult prisons if they previously had an IEP or were diagnosed with a disability (with some limitations for 18- to 21-year-olds in adult prisons).

Currently, IDEA requires a report on the extent of dropping out among students with disabilities.[54] However, the usefulness of this information will be diminished because IDEA and NCLB Act rely on different definitions for "dropouts," making it difficult to compare dropout rates between the two populations.[55]

Under the Child Find provisions of IDEA, states are expected to proactively reach out to children and youth with disabilities. States are to ensure that "All children with disabilities residing in the State ... who are in need of special education and related services, are identified, located, and evaluated and a practical method is developed and implemented to determine which children with disabilities are currently receiving

needed special education and related services."[56] This definition appears to encompass children and youth ages three through 21. However, states tend to focus their efforts on finding younger children with disabilities rather than youth.

The lack of school and district outreach services to school dropouts is a major IDEA shortcoming. Many disconnected youth eventually want to change their situations and become reconnected with mainstream institutions, including education. For disconnected youth with disabilities, the services and support available under IDEA could help them accomplish this.

What are the Opportunities in IDEA Reauthorization?

In the House, an IDEA reauthorization bill has passed; the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee approved a bill in late June. The House measure seeks to make significant changes to the current IDEA (Part B) program in a range of areas, such as the alignment of IDEA and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) provisions, IEPs, parental notice and due process rights, discipline, and "pre-referral" to reading programs. While every element of the reauthorization has potential import for youth, the IDEA opportunities listed below focus on a set of issues that directly relate to youth with disabilities who are disconnected or at risk of becoming disconnected from school and their communities.

Child Find:

- Explicitiy recognize that youth under age 21 are part of the current Child Find mandate so that states receive a federal "signal" to implement Child Find for older children as well.
- Emphasize Child Find activities directed at those youth who have dropped out of school and add provisions requiring counseling for youth about the return to school.

Transition requirements:

- Adopt congruent language in IDEA, the Perkins Act, the Rehabilitation Act, and WIA regarding the planning and provision of transition services for youth with disabilities from school to postsecondary education or employment.

- Consider new dedicated funding in IDEA to enhance transition services for IDEA students, including the hiring of vocational rehabilitation counselors to serve every high school, augmenting existing Rehabilitation Act services, and establishing linkages to WIA.

Data:

- Require the Secretary of Education to report to Congress within one year recommendations regarding effective mechanisms for including data on students with disabilities in the State Reports on Drop Out currently required under NCLB.[57]
- Supplement the requirement in the NCLB Act[58] that states and districts report achievement data of students with disabilities by requiring disaggregation of this data by race, ethnicity, and English language proficiency.
- Require the Secretary of Education to (1) report to Congress on model state programs and tools that are currently used in states to track the post-high school education and employment outcomes for all categories of high school graduates with disabilities through age 24, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and language proficiency, and (2) recommend how such tracking might be coordinated by a variety of programs (e.g., WIA, the Rehabilitation Act) that reach youth with disabilities.

Research-based training and curricula:

- Require that the Secretary of Education undertake research and demonstration programs aimed at developing more effective programs for youth with reading difficulties and disseminate findings regarding promising approaches.

Disproportionate participation:

- Expand the current provision about review and revision of policies, practices, and procedures related to disproportionate participation by race by giving the Secretary of Education, not just the states, the authority to review, and allow, as appropriate, the Secretary to require the states to provide plans of corrective action.
- Include in the consideration by the Secretary of Education and the states not just disproportionate student identification and educa-

tional placements but also school dropout levels that are disproportionate by race.

Alternative education settings:

- Identify explicitly that publicly funded alternative schools and twilight schools (along with charter schools that already are explicitly referenced in current law) must receive IDEA funding for the special education services that they provide.
- Require the Secretary of Education to undertake a study of publicly funded alternative education settings to better understand: (1) the extent to which such institutions serve IDEA-eligible youth but do not receive IDEA funding; (2) the reasons why such institutions do not seek or do not receive IDEA funding; and (3) the technical assistance needs of such institutions related to IDEA implementation.

Conclusion

Youth with disabilities are an important subgroup of disconnected youth in the United States. IDEA has improved the educational opportunities for many youth by providing them with services and requiring them to be integrated into general education curricula to the greatest extent possible. However, most of the disconnected youth with disabilities were likely inadequately served by general and special education programs in the public schools they attended. IDEA must be strengthened with regard to children and youth at risk of becoming disconnected because, if it is not, the nation will lose the benefit of the talents of too many Americans with disabilities.

The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act and Disconnected Youth

By Bob Reeg

Overview

By any measure of disconnection—whether it be separation from family, absence from school, or non-participation in the economy—runaway and homeless youth certainly fall within its scope. The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) establishes and authorizes funding for a set of programs that offer a range of supports to runaway and homeless youth, including street-based outreach and education, youth and family counseling, emergency shelter, transitional housing, and services such as academic and employment preparation, life skills training, and health care. Evidence from federally sponsored evaluations clearly indicates that participation in RHYA-funded services makes a positive difference in the lives of the young people fortunate enough to participate in them. Reauthorization of RHYA provides an opportunity for Congress not only to reaffirm its support for this set of programs but also to strengthen them so that they continue to address the challenges facing this vulnerable and underserved group of disconnected youth.

This chapter describes the programs and activities authorized by RHYA, highlights the intersection between RHYA and disconnected youth, and offers recommendations for improving the Act during reauthorization.

As of the publication of this report, the House of Representatives had passed a RHYA reauthorization measure; it is not yet clear when the Senate will begin its deliberations.

What Is the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act?

RHYA[1] establishes and authorizes funding for a set of programs targeted to young people in runaway and homeless situations and the network of community-based, faith-based, and public organizations supporting them. RHYA establishes three service programs and a set of support activities.

The Basic Center Program (BCP), authorized under Part A of the Act, provides funding to public and nonprofit private entities to establish and operate local centers that provide services for runaway and homeless youth. Among the services provided through RHYA-funded basic centers are safe and appropriate shelter; individual, family, and group counseling; street-based services; home-based services for families with youth at risk of separation from the family; and drug abuse education and prevention services. The maximum length of time a youth may reside in a basic center using federal funds is 14 days. BCP services are available to youth 17 years of age and younger.[2]

BCP funds are awarded using both formula and competition mechanisms, with an allotment of BCP funds to each state based on its relative population of individuals under 18 years of age, and then competition used thereafter to distribute the state's allotment among applicants seeking to operate basic centers. The FY 2003 BCP allocation is approximately $49.3 million. In 2002, 310 organizations received BCP funds.[3]

The Transitional Living Program (TLP), authorized under Part B of the Act, provides funding to public and nonprofit private entities to establish and operate projects that provide shelter and services designed to promote a transition to self-sufficient living and to prevent long-term dependency on social services. Among the services provided through RHYA-funded transitional living projects are shelter, information and counseling in basic life skills (e.g., money management, budgeting, consumer education, and use of credit), interpersonal skill-building, educational achievement, job attainment skills, and mental and physical health care. The maximum length of stay a youth may reside in a transitional living project using federal funds is 18 months. TLP services are available to youth from 16 through 21 years of age. TLP funds are awarded via national competition. The FY 2003 TLP allocation is approximately $40.5 million. In 2002, 234 organizations received TLP funds.

The Street Outreach Program (SOP), authorized under Part E of the Act, provides funding to nonprofit entities to provide services to youth who have been subjected to, or who are at risk of being subjected to, sexual abuse, prostitution, or sexual exploitation. Among the services provided through RHYA-funded street outreach programs are

identification and outreach; crisis intervention and counseling; information and referral to housing, transitional living, and health care; and advocacy, education and prevention services related to alcohol and drug abuse, sexual exploitation, sexually transmitted diseases, and physical and sexual assault. SOP services are available to youth not more than 21 years of age. SOP funds are awarded via national competition. The FY 2003 SOP appropriation is approximately $15.4 million. In 2002, 141 organizations received SOP funds.

The Act also authorizes appropriations for a set of activities that support runaway and homeless youth and RHYA grantees, including a national communications system (i.e., National Runaway Switchboard) to assist runaway and homeless youth in communicating with their families and with service providers (Part C); training and technical assistance to grantees, applicants, and youth workers (Part D, Part F); research, evaluation, demonstrations, and services (Part D); and grantee data collection and reporting, monitoring, and outcome and performance measurement (Part F). These activities are funded via a reservation of not more than 10 percent of funds from the Runaway and Homeless Youth consolidated appropriation.

The authorization of RHYA appropriations is structured as follows: appropriations for the BCP, TLP, and support activities are consolidated into a single "Runaway and Homeless Youth Consolidated Programs" account. The Act includes a formula for allocating this single appropriation among the BCP, TLP, and support activities. The appropriation for the SOP is made to a separate "Runaway Youth Prevention" account. In FY 2003, Congress appropriated approximately $90 million to the runaway and homeless youth consolidated account and approximately $15.4 million to the runaway prevention account.

RHYA, first enacted in 1974 as a title within the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, was last reauthorized in 1999 in the Missing, Exploited, and Runaway Children Protection Act.[4] The authorization for RHYA programs expires at the end of federal FY 2003.

How Is RHYA Related to Disconnected Youth?

Definitions and Prevalence

A homeless youth, as defined in RHYA, is an individual "not more than 21 years of age ... for whom it is not possible to live in a safe environment with a relative and who has

no other safe alternative living arrangement."[5] While RHYA itself does not define "runaway youth," the Act's accompanying regulation defines such a person as an individual "under 18 years of age who absents himself or herself from home or place of legal residence without the permission of parents or legal guardians."[6] Neither the Act nor its regulations define "throwaway youth," but that term is understood to be a young person who is asked to leave home by a parent or another adult in the household and is away overnight, or a young person who is away from home overnight and prevented from returning home.[7]

Determining the number of youth who experience runaway or homeless situations is difficult, given the temporary and often hidden nature of their living arrangements and the absence of reliable methods for counting people experiencing residential instability. Congress itself recognized this complexity, including a finding in RHYA that "the exact nature of the problem [of running away and homelessness among youth] is not well defined because national statistics on the size and profile of the runaway youth population are not tabulated."[8]

That being said, efforts have been made to estimate the size of the runaway and homeless youth population. Most recently, the U.S. Department of Justice estimated that in 1999 nearly 1.7 million youth had a runaway/thrownaway episode.[9] A 1995 study conducted for the federal government by the Research Triangle Institute reported a far higher figure—an estimated 2.8 million youth.[10]

These and other studies of the prevalence of youth homelessness do not typically include individuals 18 and older within their scope, thus highlighting the special difficulty of determining how many such youth (i.e., between ages 18-24) experience homelessness each year.

Runaway and Homeless Youth and Disconnection

Runaway and homeless youth are among the ranks of our nation's severely disconnected youth. Regardless of whether the "disconnection" is measured by separation from family, absence from school, or non-participation in the economy, youth in runaway and homeless situations typically meet all three conditions. For these young people, their separation from societal institutions is accentuated by their lack of permanent housing, which is not only disruptive in and of itself, but also indicative of the larger socioeconomic instability they are experiencing.

Family Disconnection

Contrary to the images of runaways as children throwing temper tantrums or as wanderlust adventurers, such as portrayed by Norman Rockwell and Mark Twain, young people absent from their homes or other legal places of residence often have left voluntarily or have been expelled against their will as a consequence of serious problems in the home environment.[11] For example, a federally sponsored study of youth residing in RHYA-funded basic centers reported that 47 percent of the youth indicated that intense conflict with their parent or guardian was a major problem contributing to their shelter use; 42 percent reported physical harm by a family or household member; and 17 percent reported unwanted sexual behavior forced by a family or household member. The authors concluded that "[o]ne of the themes that emerged from ... the study is the degree of conflict in youths' families. Youths were not just arguing with their parents or guardians, but they were being beaten, sexually violated, and thrown out of the house."[12] Another federally sponsored study of homeless youth revealed similarly distressing findings, including that 38 percent of them reported family conflict as the main reason for leaving home. Sadly, 62 percent of youth said that someone in their household let them know they were no longer wanted there.[13]

A second indicator of family disconnection among homeless youth is the extent of their involvement with state custodial systems (i.e., child welfare, juvenile justice, and mental health). The writers of an authoritative review of research on youth homelessness summarized the literature as finding "that many homeless youth have repeated contacts with public social service systems, many which occurred at very early ages.... Many homeless youth also report stays in psychiatric facilities and criminal justice facilities."[14] An additional study described the high proportion of runaway youth in contact with state custodial institutions as evidence of family disruption.[15]

Homeless youth ages 18 and older may also experience violence in their home environments, but their loss of housing is not explicitly ascribable to "child abuse and neglect" because they are no longer minors and required to remain at home. The reality for these older youth is that they lack families who are economically or emotionally prepared to provide support for their young adult children.

Youth aging out of the foster care system and being discharged from the juvenile justice system are at particular risk. States have diminished interest in supporting older youth who are no longer entitled to custodial care due to their age. Even if homelessness does not occur immediately upon discharge from state custody, the loss of a safe and stable living arrangement may take place not long thereafter. For example, one

study of youth aging out of foster care found that 12 percent of the young people had spent at least some time homeless during the first year post-discharge.[16] An earlier study revealed that 25 percent of such youth were homeless at least one night.[17] A survey of 285 Minnesota homeless youth (aged 18-21) reported that 38 percent had been in a correctional facility prior to their homeless episode, and, of those, only 42 percent had exited into a stable housing situation.[18]

Clearly then, family violence, the absence of caring or economically prepared families, and the lack of comprehensive surrogate state custodial systems contribute to the literal disconnection of the runaway and homeless youth population from the principal institution in U.S. society that ensures protection and care for others—the family.

School Disconnection

Many runaway and homeless youth experience educational challenges that precede their residential instability. The authors of the youth homelessness literature review cited above report that "[c]onsistently, studies suggest that many homeless youth have had interrupted or difficult school histories, and many are not currently attending school."[19] The latest federally sponsored evaluation of the BCP uncovered that 50 percent of surveyed youth were not attending classes regularly in the 30 days prior to accessing a basic center. Of these 50 percent, 30 percent were enrolled in school but skipped most of their classes; 17 percent had dropped out; and 16 percent had been expelled or suspended.[20] The latest federally sponsored evaluation of the TLP reported that 41 percent of homeless youth participating in the study had dropped out of school before completing high school.[21]

These difficulties may be attributable to the inability of homeless youth to concentrate on learning while living in high-stress family environments, hop-scotching from school to school during the course of multiple custodial arrangements or family relocations, and contending with the general conditions of poverty and violence that envelop the communities in which some of the young people live.

Once they are homeless, youth experience great impediments to educational opportunities. Among them are residency requirements (homeless young people may not be able to "prove" residency in the school district in which they are temporarily living), documentation requirements (homeless young people may not have ready access to immunization and academic records necessary for enrollment), transportation difficulties (homeless young people may have no means to travel to the school in which they were enrolled prior to becoming homeless), and school fees.[22] The school disconnection that results from these barriers contributes to social and emotional challenges,

such as difficulty establishing connections to peer support systems and forming mentoring relationships with teachers, further increasing the potential for academic failure. For unaccompanied youth, these obstacles are compounded by the absence of parents and guardians necessary for providing childhood records, granting consent to participate in school activities, and advocating on behalf of the educational rights of the youth,[23] as well as by a desire on the part of many of these youth to remain hidden from parents or state or local authorities. For homeless youth ages 18 and older, difficulty in pursuing educational opportunities, including higher learning, is more a result of extreme poverty, poor academic performance in earlier years, and their need to prioritize survival tasks, such as securing daily food and shelter. This amalgamation of thwarted learning opportunities limits meaningful participation of these youth in economic life and inhibits their acquisition of life skills necessary for self-sufficiency.

Work Disconnection

Runaway and homeless youth fare no better on the economic front. For instance, 32 percent of surveyed youth receiving basic center services had worked part time, but only 3 percent had worked full time, in the 30 days prior to entering the basic center. Twelve percent reported drug dealing as a source of money to support themselves in the 30 days prior to entering the basic center; 7 percent had panhandled; and 1 percent had engaged in prostitution.[24] Likewise, the federally sponsored study of older homeless youth cited above revealed that only 31 percent of respondent youth were working at the time of TLP intake.[25]

Some homeless youth may be too young to work legally. Others may not have yet acquired the skills needed to secure employment. Some young people face barriers to employment due to poor physical health, addiction, or mental illness. Still others may be forced by their life circumstance and vulnerability to participate in the "street economy," selling sex or dealing drugs in exchange for cash. All of these youth obviously struggle with earning income at levels necessary for meeting their most basic needs for survival on their own.

RHYA as a Connection Intervention

Fortunately, RHYA programs are available to some runaway and homeless youth as an intervention for addressing the disruptions that contribute to their perilous life circumstances. The most recent federally sponsored evaluations of the BCP[26] and TLP,[27] both published in 1997, validated these programs' utility in restoring family connections and ensuring the target populations' successful achievement of educational goals and economic independence.

With regard to family disconnection, the BCP evaluation reported that youth experienced lessened rates of family conflict and parental physical abuse after leaving a basic center. The TLP evaluation indicated that many youth were attempting to make or maintain relationships with their families and that their participation in the transitional living project had helped them better manage communication with their families.

In terms of school disconnection, the BCP evaluation found that participation by surveyed youth in school had doubled six months after basic center services ended, compared to the participation rate 30 days prior to accessing a basic center. The TLP evaluation found that the educational status of youth receiving TLP supports was significantly better six months after entry, compared to homeless youth not participating in a transitional living project. More participant youth were in school (45 percent) than were comparison youth (30 percent). On an even brighter note, the proportion of participant youth attending college was three times that of comparison youth.

Regarding employment outcomes, again the BCP and TLP studies indicated progress for those young people who participate in RHYA-funded programs. The BCP evaluation found that 61 percent of youth were working after leaving a basic center, compared to only 37 percent working prior to entering the shelter. The TLP evaluation found that 60 percent of youth receiving TLP supports were employed at least part-time, compared to only 41 percent of homeless youth not participating in a transitional living project.

Evidence from these federally sponsored evaluations clearly indicates that participation in RHYA-funded services makes a positive difference in the lives of the young people fortunate enough to participate in them.

What Are Some Opportunities in RHYA Reauthorization?

A House hearing on reauthorization of RHYA was held in April and was quickly followed by bi-partisan introduction of the Runaway, Homeless, and Missing Children Protection Act (H.R. 1925). The Bush Administration cooperated in the development of the legislation, which was passed by the House of Representatives on May 20, 2003.

Among its provisions, H.R. 1925:

- Reauthorizes the runaway and homeless youth consolidated account at $105 million in FY 2004 and at the "such sums as necessary" level in each of FY 2005 through FY 2008.

- Reauthorizes the runaway prevention account at the "such sums as necessary" level in each of FY 2004 through FY 2008.
- Adjusts the formula for allocating the annual runaway and homeless youth consolidated appropriation between BCP and TLP. BCP is assigned 55 percent of the allocation and TLP assigned 45 percent, compared to a 70/30 split under current law. However, the legislation permits the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to deviate up to 10 percent from the stated percentages when necessary to ensure that continuation obligations under both programs are met.
- Requires the Secretary of HHS, in collaboration with the Interagency Council on Homelessness, to develop within two years of enactment a report on promising strategies to end youth homelessness.
- Requires basic centers and transitional living projects to coordinate with school district homeless liaisons to ensure that youth participating in RHYA programs receive information about the services available to them under federal homeless education law.
- Identifies maternity group homes as an explicit type of transitional living project and provides a definition of such a living arrangement.
- Requires HHS to evaluate the housing outcomes of TLP participants 12 to 18 months after their exit from the program.
- Clarifies that basic centers may not shelter youth ages 18 and older.
- Permits youth aged 16 participating in a TLP to remain in the program until they reach age 18, an exception from the mandated 18-month maximum length of stay.
- Permits basic centers to exceed the specified 20-bed maximum capacity if the center can demonstrate that an applicable state or local facility licensure law requires it to provide a higher maximum.
- Authorizes basic centers to make available, at the request of a youth, testing for sexually transmitted diseases.
- Prohibits the use of RHYA funds for needle or syringe distribution.

The fundamental reauthorization goals of youth advocates are to ensure that RHYA programs are continued and that funding levels for them are increased. Advocates contend that current funding levels are far too low to ensure supports for the thousands of young people in need of crisis intervention, emergency shelter, and tran-

sitional living services each year. While decisions about RHYA funding are settled through the appropriations process, reauthorization does provide an opportunity for Congress to reaffirm its support for RHYA programs generally and to establish funding ceilings for the programs specifically. Under either scenario, advocates have identified $150 million as their desired target funding level for RHYA programs in FY 2004, including $130 million for the runaway and homeless youth consolidated account and $20 million for the runaway prevention account.[28] This $45 million increase over the FY 2003 level would ensure services for young people in those major metropolitan areas and rural regions that still lack housing and services targeted to runaway and homeless youth, as well as enable an increased number of youth to be served in those communities with existing programs. An appropriations increase could also fill funding gaps that service providers are facing as state and local governments reduce social services funding.[29]

Other proposals that do not substantially alter the purpose or framework of RHYA, but rather provide helpful "technical" adjustments to the Act have been suggested by youth advocates.[30] These include:

- TLP Length of Stay—Increase the maximum length of time any youth may stay in a TLP from 18 months to 24 months. This adjustment would provide TLPs greater ability to provide more extensive supports to youth who are younger or who are facing multiple barriers to connection.
- Maximum BCP Grant—Increase the maximum award level for Basic Center grantees from $200,000 to a higher level, in recognition of the true cost of operating a basic center. The maximum grant award level has not been increased since the law was first enacted in 1974.
- Small State Minimum BCP Allotment—Increase the minimum BCP allotment for states with small youth populations from the current $100,000 to at least $150,000 in recognition of the increased costs of establishing a basic center network within even small states.
- Territory BCP Allotment—Increase the maximum BCP allotment for U.S. territories from the current $40,000 to at least $100,000 in recognition of the increased costs of establishing a basic center network within a territory.
- Federal Program Coordination—The coordination section of the Act could be strengthened by instructing HHS to ensure collaboration

between RHYA programs and federal education, workforce development, health services, public assistance, and other programs.

- Study on Custodial System Discharge Policies—The research and evaluation section of the statute could be strengthened by calling for a study on the intersection between state custodial systems and youth homelessness.

A matter pertaining to homeless youth that the Senate has addressed outside of RHYA reauthorization relates to providing federal support for maternity group homes through a new grant program. The version of the CARE Act passed by the Senate on April 9, 2003 (S. 476) includes an authorization of funds (at the "such sums as may be necessary" level in FY 2004) for maternity group homes.[31] The authorization is inserted as a distinct purpose within the runaway and homeless youth consolidated account. Its inclusion does not alter how the remainder of appropriations made to the account are to be allocated among the other RHYA programs and activities also authorized therein. The Senate measure also authorizes an evaluation of maternity group homes funded under RHYA.

Conclusion

RHYA plays an essential role in connecting (or reconnecting) youth to family, school, and the economy. Reauthorization of the Act provides an opportunity for Congress to reaffirm its support for the network of federally funded emergency shelters, transitional living projects, and street outreach teams that provide opportunities to young people experiencing residential crisis and to strengthen such programs so that they continue to address the numerous challenges facing this vulnerable and underserved group of disconnected youth.

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program and Disconnected Youth

By Jodie Levin-Epstein

Overview

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) federal welfare program is a $16.5 billion block grant to states. Historically, welfare provided cash grants for needy families, and this continues under TANF; however, a primary goal of TANF is the employment of adult recipients. The block grant provides states considerable flexibility in deciding both *who* receives services and *what* benefits and services are provided. TANF expired in October 2002 and currently operates under a continuing resolution. Reauthorization is now expected in 2003.

TANF can connect with disconnected youth in two broad ways. TANF can reach those youth *within* its caseload—either parenting youth receiving benefits themselves or youth in families headed by adults receiving cash grants. In addition, TANF can offer services to disconnected youth *outside* its caseload as long as the services meet a TANF purpose and abide by other TANF requirements.

Recent research on TANF suggests that improvements to the program are necessary to help disconnected youth. Studies have found that some TANF youth are worse off when a parent participates in employment-related activities. In addition, minor teen parents who receive TANF are subject to special requirements related to their education and living arrangements; these requirements deserve to be revisited. Finally, TANF spending should be examined to consider how the block grant can best support activities related to disconnected youth. This chapter describes the TANF program gen-

erally, discusses the possible connections between TANF and disconnected youth, and offers reauthorization recommendations for improving TANF for disconnected youth.

TANF expired in 2002 and operates under a continuing resolution. To date, in the 108th Congress , the House has passed a reauthorization bill, and, in the Senate, committee hearings have been held.

What Is Temporary Assistance for Needy Families?

The nation's welfare program was revamped in 1996 with the enactment of TANF, a $16.5 billion block grant that increased the welfare program's focus on recipient employability. TANF limits families to 60 months of lifetime assistance, encourages states to get adults into jobs quickly rather than invest in their education and training, and places restrictions on federal aid to most legal immigrants.

States spend TANF on cash grants that range from $1.50 to $10 per recipient per day.[1] A state may also spend TANF funds on activities that meet one or more of the four purposes of the law:

- Provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for at home or by relatives;
- End dependence by needy parents on government benefits by promoting work and marriage;
- Reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies; and
- Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

TANF funds may be spent not only on families receiving cash grants but also on families who have left welfare and families who never have received welfare. In fact, in 44 states in 2001, more TANF funds were spent on *services* than on cash grants.[2] States determine the level of income-eligibility for cash grants and can set other eligibility requirements for services funded by TANF.

How Is TANF Related to Disconnected Youth?

TANF directly reaches almost one million youth under age 20 in its caseload—of these 942,500 adolescents, about 122,000 (13 percent) are parents.[3] The share of minor

mothers who are welfare recipients is significantly lower under TANF than under the prior welfare program. Before TANF, about 25 percent of minor mothers received welfare; under TANF, only 5 percent of minor mothers are recipients.[4]

TANF Teen Parents

Teen parents are an important focus for TANF. Earlier research found that about one-half of teen mothers became welfare recipients within five years of becoming parents; most received aid for two years, with many remaining on the welfare caseloads much longer. Even teen parents who initially avoid welfare often find themselves as welfare recipients later because they tend to have larger families over time.[5] Larger families tend to have higher rates of poverty than smaller families.

Under TANF, minor teen parents are subject to two eligibility requirements. One relates to school/training participation. The other mandates that teen mothers reside in approved living arrangements. While the intent of the these provisions is positive—to ensure that teen mothers complete school and live under adult supervision—their implementation has had unintended negative consequences. In addition to these two requirements for minor parents, a third TANF provision places teen parents—usually older teens—in direct competition with adults for the few vocational education slots that can count in state TANF programs.

School/training requirement. In order to be eligible for assistance with federal TANF funds, an unmarried, minor, custodial parent must be "participating" in school or approved training when her infant is 12 weeks of age or older. If the teen parent is participating full time in school or training, the TANF 60-month time limit generally does not begin "ticking" until age 19. The rationale for encouraging school completion is evident from dropout statistics for teen parents. Almost 60 percent of teens with a school-age pregnancy drop out at some point between 8th and 12th grade, with more than a one-quarter of these teen mothers dropping out *before* they were pregnant.[6]

The few evaluations of programs that sought to address teen parent education and employability before TANF had disappointing findings: any initial improvement in participation did not translate into lasting impacts on earnings, employment, or welfare receipt.[7] More recent research has shown limited positive outcomes for teen parents. Ohio's program generally improved enrollment and attendance and increased the likelihood that in-school participants would earn a GED or high school diploma. It did not show these effects, however, for those who had dropped out of school, and, at the four-year follow-up, no employment or earnings impacts were evident for participants

overall. In California, in contrast, the positive impact on graduation rates was greatest among those teen parents who had dropped out of school (and had not been held back a grade).[8]

States impose sanctions[9] to ensure continued school/training participation by minor parents (about eight states also offer financial bonuses for compliance).[10] A CLASP analysis found that teen parents appear to be sanctioned[11] at a higher rate than the overall caseload in each of the five states that were able to provide such data.[12] Sanctions can cause turbulence in families. This is significant because such turbulence may lead to negative academic, emotional, and behavioral effects for children.[13]

Living arrangement rule. TANF prohibits a state from spending federal TANF funds on assistance to an unmarried, minor, custodial parent unless the teen lives with a parent, a legal guardian, an adult relative, or in a "second chance" home; states are able to approve exceptions, such as when a minor parent is best off living independently to avoid an abusive environment. The need for these exceptions reflects the high rates of abuse among teen parents.[14]

However, it appears an unintended consequence of the living arrangement rule (in combination with the school/training requirement) may be that some teens who are not "living at home" cannot get TANF applications at local offices, often due to local caseworker misunderstandings about the rules. For example, among 1,500 teen parents surveyed in several neighborhoods of Atlanta, Boston, and Chicago, between 16 percent and 47 percent of those who sought TANF were told they were not eligible and they did not even fill out an application.[15] A survey of homeless youth found that a few who did apply felt that the living arrangement rule led to placements that jeopardized their well-being.[16] Denying applications to teen parents who are eligible and in need of assistance may jeopardize their efforts to complete their education and attain economic stability through work.

Vocational education cap. Under TANF, older teen parents seeking education end up competing with adult TANF recipients for the limited vocational education "slots" that count towards the state's "participation rate." TANF requires states to ensure that at least a certain percentage of recipients are participating in work activities, and states can only satisfy 30 percent of this requirement by counting adults (including older teen parents) participating in vocational training. This 30 percent cap is a disincentive to allow people to engage in vocational education, and it puts teens and adults in competition for limited education slots.

Other TANF Youth

While much attention has focused on young parents and welfare, the approximately 820,500 non-parenting teens who live in TANF families are, in many ways, the forgotten children of welfare reform. No TANF provisions are explicitly directed towards these teens, and, up until recently, there has been little known about them. A study conducted in three cities found that adolescents whose mothers were receiving welfare had significant needs: they had lower levels of cognitive achievement and higher levels of behavioral and emotional problems than those whose mothers had left welfare or had never received welfare.[17]

An underlying assumption of the TANF welfare program is that children and youth are better off when their parents work. A recent study of low-income families (under 200 percent of the federal poverty level) found few associations—either positive or negative—between adolescents' developmental status and their mothers' transitions into or out of work or on and off welfare. While moves by mothers into employment were associated with somewhat diminished adolescent psychological distress and anxiety, the study also suggested that more hours of work did not necessarily mean better mental health. Adolescents whose mothers worked 40 hours or more appeared to benefit less than those whose mothers worked fewer hours. Further, while this study may offer some good news for low-income mothers in the workforce, it does not tell us anything about the direct impact of welfare policy on adolescent well-being.[18]

There is limited research on how welfare work requirements for parents affect their adolescents. In other words, do welfare requirements themselves cause a developmental change in adolescents? Research now suggests that adolescents' school achievement and progress have been negatively affected by parental participation in welfare and employment programs, according to an MDRC analysis of eight experimental evaluations.[19] The most dramatic negative impact was among the students in welfare families who had younger siblings; these youth experienced increased rates of school dropout, school suspensions, grade repetition, and poorer school performance. (Outcomes for students without younger siblings were more mixed—declines in school performance along with lower rates of suspension.) Some researchers, including ethnographers, have suggested that mothers may lean particularly on kids who are the most reliable, giving them extra "adult" responsibilities, such as providing primary care for younger siblings, which in turn makes it harder for them to succeed. These youth may become "adult" in other ways—unsupervised adolescents may take advantage of parental absence and become sexually active.[20] In addition, teens in families who have just left the TANF rolls are more likely to work more than 20 hours a

week themselves, which is associated with lower academic achievement.[21] Unfortunately, not enough research exists to either fully identify or explain the effects of TANF on youth.

Data also are lacking on how many youth in TANF families have other characteristics that might land them in the category of "disconnected youth." For example, disability often signals risk: nearly 70 percent of secondary students with disabilities came from households with less than $25,000 in income. In addition, nearly 40 percent of youth with disabilities drop out during high school or earlier, compared to a 25 percent dropout rate for the general population.[22] However, the number of youth with disabilities within the TANF program is not known.

Youth Outside the TANF System

TANF essentially leaves to states the choice of whether and to what extent to spend TANF funds on youth outside the welfare system. However, a number of states have taken advantage of their flexible funding under TANF to develop programs for at-risk youth generally. Often these programs seek to prevent school dropout and teen pregnancy, goals which are in keeping with the purposes of TANF. State TANF investments in teen pregnancy prevention can take advantage of research that has pointed to a variety of programs that successfully reduce sexual risk-taking and even reduce teen pregnancies.[23] According to a survey by the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA), 46 states in 1999 used TANF funds for some type of teen pregnancy prevention or non-marital birth prevention initiative, ranging from after-school services to media campaigns to teen support and education programs[24] and including projects targeting subsequent births by teen parents, particularly through support for home-visiting programs.[25]

Some states have taken a broad approach to helping youth. In Illinois, the Teen REACH (Responsibility, Education, Achievement, Caring, and Hope) Program uses a comprehensive family assessment form for each new enrollee, so that families can be linked to a variety of health and social services. In response to the increased caretaking responsibilities taken on by many teens, Teen REACH recently expanded its program so that participants could bring along their younger siblings.[26] States can also choose to address particular at-risk populations. For instance, since research has shown that girls in foster care have higher rates of early pregnancy than other girls,[27] a state might target TANF funds for prevention services to teens "aging out" of foster care.

TANF funds also present an opportunity for inter-agency collaboration. For example, in Pennsylvania, TANF funds support a range of youth programming in Workforce Investment Act (WIA) local workforce areas. About $15 million is provided annually to Youth Councils, an amount roughly equivalent to one-half of the state WIA youth formula allocation.[28]

What Are Some Opportunities in TANF Reauthorization?

The experience with and research about TANF and youth suggest a variety of ways in which reauthorization presents an opportunity to improve the program. The opportunities relate both to those youth *within* TANF and those youth *outside* TANF who benefit from TANF-funded services. Reauthorization of TANF was expected in 2002; the House of Representatives passed a bill, as did the Senate Finance Committee, but no measure reached the Senate floor. In early 2003, the House passed a measure (H.R. 4) supported by the Administration (which is nearly identical to the bill passed by the House in 2002). In the Senate, the Finance Committee is anticipated to take up TANF reauthorization in the mid-summer.

TANF Teen Parents

The findings that the two minor parent rules may perversely keep needy young families from applying for TANF *and* that vocational education rules pit older teen parents against adults for "countable" slots suggest that a number of changes should be made to TANF in reauthorization:

- Require state plans to identify the unmet service and living arrangement needs of teen parents.
- Explicitly permit states to establish a transitional compliance period for teen parents. This period would allow income-eligible minor parents, such as school dropouts and homeless youth, time to transition into meeting the school and living arrangement rules while receiving TANF.
- Ensure that states consult with minor parents about their preferred living arrangements and do a better job of helping them find safe alternative arrangements
- Adequately fund "second chance" homes programs in other laws so that minors are better able to meet the TANF living arrangement requirement.

- End restrictions on the ability of states to count vocational training as a strategy for helping parents, including teen parents.
- Commence the lifetime limit "clock" on TANF assistance for teen parents who are completing education and training programs when they turn age 20, rather than when they turn age 19.
- Establish sanctions protections procedures that help teen parents understand, avoid, and/or end sanctions.
- Require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to conduct studies of teen parents to identify best practices related to teen parent enrollment and tracking; the reasons eligible teen parents are not receiving TANF assistance; and sanction policies and impact.

The House-passed bills have retained the status quo on teen parent provisions; the 2002 Senate Finance bill provided for a "transitional compliance" period, as well as studies on teen parents.

Other TANF Youth

Although 10- to 14-year-olds in low-income families sometimes have lower anxiety when their parents get jobs, the discovery that youth in TANF families are sometimes worse off—even when their mothers are "success stories"—should prompt Congress to make some changes during reauthorization, including:

- Require state plans to establish goals and take action to meet the developmental needs of low-income adolescents by providing opportunities for positive youth development activities, in keeping with the Administration's original welfare proposal.[29]
- Encourage states to develop TANF assessments and parental work assignments that take into account the needs of adolescents in TANF families—for example, when a parent's participation would leave an adolescent who lives in a dangerous neighborhood unsupervised.

The 2002 Senate Finance bill took an important step in the right direction by including a requirement that Individual Responsibility Plans be developed with TANF families that "address the issue of child well-being and, when appropriate, *adolescent well-being*, and that may include services such as domestic violence counseling, mental health referrals, and parenting courses" [italics added].[30] In addition, more than 54 researchers, troubled by the new findings regarding TANF

youth, have urged expanded child care and supervised after-school programs, as well as the avoidance of long parental work schedules.[31] The National Youth Law Center has urged that the absence of supervision for minor youth should qualify as "good cause" reason why a parent should not be required to participate in a mandated work activity and, under certain situations, should be the basis for exemptions from work requirements.[32]

Youth Outside the TANF System

Under TANF, states may or may not spend funds on disconnected youth outside the system, and there remains some uncertainty about precisely when states can spend TANF funds on services for youth who are not otherwise receiving TANF assistance. There are a number of ways Congress could enhance the likelihood that TANF could reach disconnected youth:

- Establish explicitly that TANF spending on youth development programs is an allowable expenditure. Advocated by the National Collaboration for Youth,[33] this provision would not *require* states to make expenditures on disconnected youth; rather, it would simply convey that such expenditures need not rest on tests related to the current TANF purposes, such as those about family formation.
- Change documentation requirements to enable programs that serve non-TANF youth to avoid paperwork burdens, particularly collection of individual income verification information.
- Allow spending on teen pregnancy prevention programs as part of any funds Congress sets aside for "marriage promotion." Establish priority for funding of proven programs.[34]

In the 2002 deliberations, the Senate Finance Committee bill earmarked $1 billion in TANF funds for marriage activities over five years; funds could be spent on teen pregnancy prevention, among other activities. The 2002 House measure would have allocated $1.6 billion but would not explicitly allow funding for teen pregnancy prevention; the 2003 House measure that passed in February provides $1.8 billion over six years and continues to be silent on teen pregnancy prevention as an allowable activity.

Conclusion

Congress has the opportunity to amend the 1996 welfare law to reflect new knowledge about how the TANF program is affecting teen parents and other teen recipients. We now know that the goals of schooling and supervised living arrangements for minor parents are sometimes thwarted by misinterpretation of the rules. Congress needs to send a signal that it does not want to shut the door on minors but instead wants income-eligible teen parents in the TANF program and subject to its requirements. Emerging research now indicates that some older TANF adolescents may be harmed when their mothers go to work. Congress needs to encourage states to consider this issue in their plans and to adapt work requirements of mothers accordingly. Finally, Congress can take a set of steps to encourage TANF spending on preventing school dropout, pregnancy, and childbearing among low-income adolescents, including those who do not receive cash grants.

The Workforce Investment Act and Disconnected Youth

By Nisha Patel and Steve Savner

Overview

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) substantially altered the federally funded system for job training and other employment-related services for adults, dislocated workers, and youth. WIA set forth a new vision for the delivery of workforce services when it replaced the former Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) system. WIA required that each of nearly 600 local workforce areas develop a One-Stop delivery system with a broad array of workforce services available to job seekers and employers. WIA also made significant changes to the kinds of services delivered to adults, dislocated workers, and youth.

The goal of WIA-funded youth services is to better prepare low-income youth who face barriers to employment for postsecondary education and/or employment. As the nation's labor force ages, youth increasingly represent a greater proportion of the workforce. Yet, more than 4 million youth aged 16-24 are high school dropouts;[1] others lack basic workforce preparedness skills that can help them transition to employment. Over half of the employment losses in the recent economic downturn were among youth 16-24, even though they comprised only 15 percent of the labor force.[2]

WIA's agenda for the reform of youth services and activities centers on the establishment of local Youth Councils and the provision of comprehensive services based on individual assessment.[3] Moving beyond traditional employment and training, WIA-funded services incorporate elements of youth development, such as leadership skills, community service, and mentoring. As part of this service strategy shift, the Act

eliminated a separate funding stream for summer jobs programs, consolidating funds that had previously been earmarked for such programs into a single formula grant to the states. The Act also called for increased emphasis on services for out-of-school youth. All of these provisions were intended to lead to better outcomes than were achieved under JTPA and to provide more meaningful pathways to postsecondary education and success in the labor market for disconnected and at-risk youth. At the same time, these structural changes were not accompanied by increased resources. In fact, since 1985 there has been a 63 percent drop in federally funded youth employment services, measured in constant dollars.[4]

In the 108th Congress to date, a WIA reauthorization measure has passed in the U.S. House of Representatives. The Senate is beginning deliberations.

What Are Key WIA Youth Provisions?

The two parts of WIA that most directly relate to youth are the youth formula grants and WIA's dedicated funding for Youth Opportunity Grants.

Formula Grants

Funding. Since FY 2000, about $1 billion per year has been distributed by formula to the states, and 85 percent of those funds are, in turn, distributed to nearly 600 local areas throughout the country. This youth formula grant marks a significant departure from the youth funding structure under JTPA. During the last years under JTPA (1997-1999), when roughly the same amount of funds were available, over 85 percent was earmarked for summer jobs programs that served primarily in-school youth. While WIA requires that summer jobs programs be included in local activities, no minimum amount of funds must be allocated for them.

Eligibility. The Act was designed to serve low-income youth who face barriers to continued education and employment. To be eligible, a young person must be aged 14 to 21[5] and low-income[6] and must have at least one of several listed barriers that include being:

- deficient in basic literacy skills;
- a school dropout;
- homeless, a runaway, or a foster child;
- pregnant or a parent;
- an offender; and

- an individual who requires additional assistance to complete an education program, or to secure and hold employment.[7]

Older youth (ages 19-21) are also eligible for services as adults under WIA and may be co-enrolled in both the youth and adult programs.

The Act also imposed a requirement to target at least 30 percent of formula funds to out-of-school youth;[8] no minimum must be spent on in-school youth. Youth who are enrolled in any school or alternative education program at the time of registration are not included in the definition of out-of-school youth. Under prior law, most participants were *in-school* youth because the summer jobs component of JTPA, which comprised the vast majority of the program, typically served in-school youth. (The much smaller year-round program did require that 50 percent of the youth be out-of-school). Thus, the 30 percent spending requirement, coupled with the elimination of targeted funding for the summer jobs program, has resulted in a significant shift in groups of youth who are served and the services they receive.

Services. Local areas are required to make services available to youth participants consistent with a service strategy based on individualized assessments of needs. Each youth's service strategy must include a career goal and must provide access to services that provide preparation for postsecondary education in appropriate cases; linkages between academic and occupational learning; preparation for unsubsidized employment opportunities, in appropriate cases; and effective connections to intermediaries with strong links to the job market and to local and regional employers.[9]

To meet a range of youth development needs, WIA establishes a set of 10 services—or "program elements"—including adult mentoring, leadership development, paid and unpaid work experiences, summer jobs linked to academic and occupational learning, tutoring, occupational skills training, and follow-up services, which must be available in each local area for inclusion in a participant's plan, as appropriate.[10]

Performance Measures. Under WIA, states are required to meet a set of performance measures. For older youth, the four performance measures are the employment rate at entry, the employment retention rate at six months, the average earnings change in six months, and the credential rate.[11] For younger youth, the three measures are skill attainment,[12] diploma or equivalent attainment, and placement and retention in postsecondary education, advanced training, or employment. There are also customer satisfaction measures for all participating youth and employers. States receive fiscal sanctions and bonuses based on the relationship of actual performance to expected levels of performance established through negotiation with the Department of Labor.

Local Governance. At the local level, planning for the use of youth funds and the delivery of services to youth is governed by local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs). A WIB must have a majority of members from the business community and is appointed by the chief elected official in the local workforce area. Each local board is required to establish a Youth Council whose members must include, among others, members of the local board with special interest or expertise in youth policy; representatives of youth service agencies, including juvenile justice and local law enforcement agencies; parents of eligible youth; and individuals, including former participants.[13] The duties of the Youth Councils include developing the portions of the local plan relating to eligible youth and coordinating WIA-funded youth activities in the local area.[14]

Youth Opportunity Grants

A key innovation included in the Act was the creation of the Youth Opportunity Grant (YOG) competitive grant program. Grants offer significant targeted resources to programs established in empowerment zones, enterprise communities, or other high-poverty areas.[15] A unique feature of the YOG programs is that all youth aged 14-21 are eligible for services, provided they reside in the designated high-poverty community served by the grantee. Each grantee must provide the required WIA program elements, as well as intensive job placement and two-year follow-up services. In addition, each must operate a youth center, similar to the one-stop systems that local areas are required to create for adults and dislocated workers.[16] Each grantee negotiates required performance levels with the Department of Labor on the same measures for older and younger youth that states and local areas are required to report on under the formula grants.[17]

Funding for Youth Opportunity Grants is authorized at a level of up to $250 million per year. Although funding in the range of $250 million per year was available during the initial years of the program, in FY 2003 funds were cut substantially and no new YOG sites beyond the original 36 have been funded. The Administration plan and the House bill propose elimination of the program in FY 2004.

How Is WIA Related to Disconnected Youth?

WIA's services are intended to draw from promising practices in the youth development and youth employment fields; these are integrated into the 10 required youth program elements.[18] These program elements are consistent with the National Youth Employment Coalition's Promising and Effective Practices Network (PEPNET) criteria[19] and with factors identified by the Levitan Youth Policy Network and the Manpower

Demonstration Research Corporation that may contribute to the success of youth programs. These factors include the presence of caring committed adults; the creation of a sense of belonging; engagement in extracurricular activities; opportunities for paid work and financial incentives; work experience projects that are visible and provide a needed, valued service to the community; hands-on education and training activities; support for personal growth; and staff members who are accessible at all hours.[20]

Child Trends synthesized research analyses of a range of youth employment programs, including Career Academies, Career Beginnings, Hospital Youth Mentoring Program, Job Corps, JOBSTART, JTPA, Junior Achievement, Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps-Career Academies, Summer Training and Education Program, and Youth Incentive Entitlement Pilot Projects. Although educational achievement, cognitive attainment, employment, and earnings outcomes across programs are mixed, there is some evidence that employment programs show potential for increasing longer term earnings of younger participants, help youth secure better jobs, and expose youth to activities that help them develop career awareness and jobs skills.

In addition, the Child Trends synthesis includes lessons about effective program approaches drawn primarily on non-experimental analyses. The findings indicate that (1) participation may be most beneficial for younger teens (i.e., 16- to 19-year-olds) and youths at high risk of poor educational or employment outcomes; (2) the more well-structured a program, the more effective it may be in sustaining youth participation; (3) residential, school-based, and community-based program types all show some positive impacts; and (4) no one type of job training stands out as more effective than others.[21] This research suggests that WIA youth programs can provide an important complement to the education and social services made available through schools, child welfare agencies, juvenile justice systems, and other youth-serving networks and agencies.

Current funding levels, however, provide access for only a very small number of eligible youth; further, the resource levels for youth (under both WIA and the predecessor youth provisions of JTPA) have been trending downward during the past 20 years. In 1985, when JTPA was fully phased in, nearly $1.6 billion was available, about equally divided between summer jobs and youth training. By 1996-1999, JTPA funding was down to a flat level of about $1 billion per year, with nearly $900 million of the amount targeted to the summer jobs program. Under WIA, funding has been at, or slightly above, $1 billion each year for the formula grants, and, as noted above, there was initially $250 million per year made available for YOGs, but that funding was virtually eliminated in 2003. Adjusted for inflation, there has been a 63 percent drop in

spending over the 18-year period from 1985-2003; that is, had spending remained constant in real dollars, $2.72 billion would be available for 2003.[22]

In 2000, over 115,000 youth received WIA services.[23] (Figures on use of WIA services are based on data on WIA exiters, as these are the most readily available national data.) By any measure, this is a small figure in relation to the population potentially in need. It appears that the number of youth exiters grew somewhat in 2001. DOL indicates that more than 126,000 youth exited WIA services in 2001. In both 2000 and 2001, most youth exiters were younger youth (aged 14-18).[24] In 2001:

- Most younger youth (81 percent) were students in high school or below. Of the remainder, 13 percent were high school dropouts, 5 percent were high school graduates, and 1 percent were high school graduates in postsecondary education.
- Among older youth, 12 percent were students in high school or below; 38 percent were high school dropouts; 42 percent were high school graduates; and 8 percent were high school graduates in postsecondary education.

While the limited funding translates into smaller numbers of youth served than one would wish—the roughly 115,000 to 126,000 youth served are only a small fraction of the nearly 3 million who are at greatest risk of disconnection by age 25[25]—the results are mostly positive, as judged by statutory performance measures.[26] In FY 2001, national performance for older youth exceeded negotiated performance levels for the entered employment rate and the employment retention rate, but failed to meet negotiated levels for earnings change and credential rate. For younger youth, national performance exceeded negotiated performance levels for all three measures. Thus, it appears that youth services under WIA can provide an effective complement to other education services for disconnected youth and those at-risk of becoming disconnected. However, as discussed in the next section, there is room for improvement, and there are differing views on how best to move forward.

What are the Opportunities in WIA Reauthorization?

WIA required dramatic changes from the prior JTPA system. States were not required to begin implementing WIA until July 2000 (although some opted to do so earlier). Thus, Congress has less than three years of experience—including time involved in starting new systems—to guide the reauthorization process. Beyond basic participation and outcome data from program years 2000 and 2001, very little publicly available data or research exist about the effectiveness of programs. The limited available information suggests that the lack of resources is a clear problem, but does not suggest an immediate need for dramatic changes to the structure of the youth services under the Act. However, the Administration, while proposing new additional funding, has made a set of recommendations that would significantly alter the structure created in 1998. In early May, the House of Representatives passed legislation (H.R. 1261) that includes many of the significant changes sought by the Administration.

Funding

WIA was funded at $1.35 billion during FY 2001 and FY 2002 and fell to $1 billion for FY 2003, largely through greatly reducing funding for the Youth Opportunity Grant program. The Administration's reauthorization proposal would maintain the overall funding level of $1 billion for FY 2004. However, state formula grants would be reduced to $750 million per year, in order to provide for a new DOL discretionary grant program, "Youth Challenge Grants" with the remaining $250 million. The House bill would also reduce formula funds appropriated by up to $250 million in order to fund Youth Challenge Grants.

Formula Grants: At current funding levels, it is not possible to provide on a large scale the kind of intensive, longer term services required to produce positive outcomes for at-risk youth with multiple barriers.[27] Moreover, the flat funding and loss of targeting for summer jobs have contributed to a sharp reduction in the availability of summer jobs for at-risk youth. Summer jobs provide important opportunities for youth and serve to prevent at-risk behaviors during non-school months. According to a recent report commissioned by the National League of Cities, summer employment among teens in 2003 is predicted to be at an historic all-time low (2.8 percentage points below last summer's rate of 39.5 percent).[28]

Discretionary Grants: The Administration's proposal to eliminate the YOG programs and establish Youth Challenge Grants (also included in H.R. 1261) does not appear to be driven by evidence-based research regarding the effectiveness of the YOG programs. Stakeholders report that many YOG sites have developed effective programs that are providing needed comprehensive services to urban and rural low-income communities. As of December 2002, YOG sites were close to achieving 1,000 positive placements per month in employment, postsecondary education, military, or apprenticeships; 60,000 youth were enrolled at an average cost of $5,000 per participant; and approximately 47 percent of youth served were out-of-school.[29]

The Youth Challenge Grant program would appear to provide a flexible pool of funds to be distributed at the Secretary of Labor's discretion, and it specifically calls for concerted efforts to provide a laboratory to test best practices that might lead to improvements in the formula grant program. There would be no requirement to target these funds for programming in very low-income communities, as is the case with the YOG program. Any Congressional funding of Youth Challenge Grants should not be done at the expense of state formula funding or Youth Opportunity Grants.

Eligibility

Out-of-School Youth. WIA requires local areas to spend at least 30 percent of formula funds on youth who are not in school.[30] The Administration has proposed that all formula funds be spent on out-of-school youth.[31] H.R. 1261 would require that 70 percent of formula funds be used for out-of-school youth, while any expenditures for in-school youth would be limited to activities that take place during non-school hours.

There is a clear need to increase resources available for out-of-school youth, but not at the expense of in-school youth. Under current rules, in-school youth must face one or more of a listed set of barriers to employment and school success in order to qualify for services. There is not always a bright line between in-school youth versus out-of-school youth. Some in-school youth have poor attendance and are at high risk of dropping out; it seems counterproductive to withhold services until they have left school. In addition, separating adjudicated and incarcerated youth from their "mainstream" peers by limiting programs to out-of-school youth may lead to poorer outcomes because youth with negative behaviors may influ-

ence one another and may not have the opportunity for interaction with positive peer role models. There are also concerns that employer interest in WIA youth programs will be significantly diminished if in-school youth are substantially excluded from the program. While employers may not necessarily be interested in recruiting disengaged youth, there has been some success with employers hiring these youth once they are "mainstreamed" with in-school peers.

Income Requirements. To be eligible for formula-funded youth programs, an individual must be between the ages of 14 and 21 and low-income[32] *and* face one or more barriers to success in school or at work. (The House bill would shift eligibility to individuals between the ages of 16 and 24.) The General Accounting Office has reported that "... eligibility documentation requirements may have excluded eligible at-risk youth from WIA services, in part because documentation to verify eligibility was difficult to obtain and verification was resource-intensive."[33] Practitioners also emphasize that the verification and documentation requirements can be a barrier to accessing services. For example, runaway and homeless youth may have difficulty documenting income eligibility, as it requires documentation of their parents' incomes. In addition, youth living in shelters may not have an address they can use for purposes of documenting their places of residence.

The House bill would eliminate income eligibility requirements for out-of-school youth, while retaining the requirements for in-school youth. While the proposal solves the problem of out-of-school youth being unable to establish their income eligibility and losing the opportunity to participate, it creates a potential problem in allowing higher income youth to participate in programs when resources for these programs are in very limited supply. Of course, it is unclear whether higher income youth would actually participate in WIA-funded services in any significant numbers.

YOG programs in high-poverty communities have taken a different approach to broadening and simplifying eligibility. Every youth who resides in the community is eligible, regardless of income or the presence of identified barriers. In programs such as these, concerns about services being provided to significant numbers with higher incomes—or without any barriers to school success or employment—would appear to be minimal, and they do not outweigh the risk of excluding low-income youth with barriers. However, formula funds go to every community in the country, and removing both income and barrier criteria in mixed-income communities seems likely to create a greater potential for the misdirection of resources. On bal-

ance, both the House bill and the YOG approach to eligibility have elements that are preferable to current law.

Performance Measures

The Administration's plan and the House bill propose two significant changes to performance measures applicable to WIA youth programs. Under the House bill, all youth (defined in the bill as ages 16-24) would be subject to a single set of measures for participants; in contrast, under the current system, outcomes for older youth (aged 19-21) are measured under one set of criteria similar to those applicable to adults, while outcomes for younger youth (14-18) are measured under a different set of criteria.[34] Three of the four measures proposed for all youth are similar to the three measures currently used for younger youth.[35] The fourth proposed measure is a so-called "efficiency" measure that has also been included in a broader Administration initiative for all employment-related programs. As proposed by the Administration, the efficiency measure would be calculated by dividing the number of participants by the funds appropriated for the program. As proposed by the House, the measure would be calculated by looking at the efficiency of states and local areas in obtaining the three other new measures.

While simplifying the measures is a step in the right direction, there are significant concerns about the efficiency measure. The proposed efficiency measure is not a useful technique for measuring the cost-effectiveness of programs. Cost and cost-effectiveness of services are important issues. However, the proposed measure would not necessarily provide any information about the quality of services received, nor adequately account for the barriers to school or employment success among participants. The proposed efficiency measure could lead program administrators and operators to avoid serving those prospective participants whom they perceive to be hardest to help if needed services will be more expensive for this group. More generally, the measure is likely to encourage local boards to move toward providing inexpensive—and possibly lower quality—services. A research agenda using scientifically valid methods for determining the impacts of various programs is the appropriate method for understanding how effective programs work and how to measure and improve their cost-effectiveness. This understanding cannot be determined simply by dividing successful outcomes by costs. In addition, technical assistance to local boards and to providers about best practices and methods for improving the cost-effectiveness of programs should also be part of an appropriate strategy to get the best results for the most people with the limited resources available.

Linkages with Other Programs

Within WIA, Youth Councils are responsible for planning and coordinating youth programs, recommending and overseeing youth service providers, and establishing linkages with educational agencies to provide services to youth. The Administration's plan and the House bill propose that Youth Councils no longer be required, but rather that local boards would have the option to create or continue Youth Councils and define their functions and purposes.[36] While some have expressed concerns that the requirement to establish Youth Councils is burdensome in relation to the small amounts of funds that some local areas—particularly rural areas—receive, there seems to be agreement that Youth Councils have been very effective in places that have taken the role seriously. A report prepared for the Department of Labor by Jobs for the Future and the Heldrich Center for Workforce Development found that certain "enabling conditions" have allowed Youth Councils to deliver more comprehensive services. These conditions include Youth Opportunity Grants, an established intermediary organization, a strong school-to-career partnership, a pre-existing community-wide planning process, influential stakeholders, an aggressive state youth policy agency or organization, and significant autonomy and authority.[37]

Youth Councils provide a mechanism for increasing linkages between WIA and other programs that serve disconnected youth. They bring together educators, representatives from juvenile justice, and other youth service agencies to develop strategies that maximize resources across agencies, identify and fill gaps in services, and, most importantly, identify the points in time when at-risk youth fall through the cracks and become disconnected. Local workforce boards are not likely to devote the same level of attention and resources to youth as are Youth Councils, given the former's broader responsibilities for job seekers and employers in the community. Given the different set of institutional players engaged in providing youth services (e.g., schools, youth service agencies) compared to those involved in providing services to adults, a separate Youth Council provides a valuable and needed forum for developing a comprehensive strategy for youth services under the Act and for coordinating those services with other youth-serving agencies. If the direction of youth policy is to be one of coordinating resources and looking across programs to best meet the needs of individual young people, then Youth Councils will be a crucial mechanism for achieving this goal.

Recommendations

Funding

At current funding levels, it is not possible to provide on a large scale the kind of intensive, longer term services required to produce positive outcomes for at-risk youth with multiple barriers. Moreover, the flat funding and loss of targeting for summer jobs have contributed to a sharp reduction in the availability of summer jobs for at-risk youth.

Congress should:

- Increase youth formula funding with additional targeted funding to states to serve out-of-school youth.
- Provide new resources to better support summer jobs programs.

The proposal to eliminate the YOG programs and establish Youth Challenge Grants is not driven by evidence-based research regarding the effectiveness of the YOG programs. Congress should:

- Continue funding for Youth Opportunity Grants.
- Fund any new, targeted discretionary grant programs with new resources, not existing WIA youth formula or YOG funds.

Eligibility

There is a clear need to increase resources available for out-of-school youth, but not at the expense of in-school youth. Congress should:

- Require that any mandated spending increase in services for out-of-school youth be accompanied with increased federal funding; current rules should continue to apply to the first $1 billion in formula funds made available to states and localities.
- Require that local plans include a rationale for how resources will be allocated between in-school and out-of-school populations, address how the services offered to in-school youth effectively supplement other programs and services available to them, and provide justification for spending on in-school populations based on local conditions.
- Eliminate income eligibility requirements in the formula grants program for both in-school and out-of-school youth except in those instances when eligibility is based solely on the need for "additional assistance to complete education ..."

- Allow high-poverty communities to consider all youth residing in the community to be eligible for the formula grants program through a federally approved waiver.

Performance Measures

While simplifying performance measures is a step in the right direction, there are significant concerns about the efficiency measure in the Administration's plan and the House bill. Congress should:

- Reject inclusion of an efficiency measure.
- Improve the cost-effectiveness of services and programs through research, identification and replication of best practices, and technical assistance.

Linkages with Other Programs

Youth Councils provide a mechanism for increasing linkages between WIA and other programs that serve disconnected youth. Congress should:

- Maintain the current requirement that every local area establish a Youth Council.

Conclusion

WIA youth programs represent one of the few federal funding streams available to provide comprehensive youth employment and youth development services to at-risk youth. Given that the system is relatively new, more data and research are needed before Congress can make informed decisions about substantially reforming the program. The program should continue to be strengthened and funded with adequate resources in order to achieve a long-term vision for providing all disconnected youth with opportunities to succeed in both education and employment.

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Endnotes

Introduction

1 Speech by Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao before the National League of Cities Congressional City Conference in Washington, D.C., March 10, 2003, at http://www.dol.gov/_sec/media/speeches/20030310_NLC.htm.

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3 Sum, A., Khatiwada, I., Pond, N., & Trub'skyy, M., with Fogg, N., Palma, S. (2003, January). *Left Behind in the Labor Market: Labor Market Problems of the Nation's Out-of-School, Young Adult Populations.* Boston, MA: Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University, p. 7.

4 Wald, M., & Martinez, T. (Forthcoming). *Disconnected Youth: Some Thoughts on Strategy.* Menlo Park, CA: Hewlett Foundation, p. 4.

5 Pittman, K., Irby, J., & Ferber, T. (2001, June). *Youth Policy in the U.S.: Some Observations and Options.* Washington, DC: The Forum for Youth Investment, pp. 1-2.

6 Also up for reauthorization are programs such as Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act, AmeriCorps, Head Start, the Rehabilitation Act, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and the Community Services Block Grant. In addition, important program changes are under consideration outside of the reauthorization process. For example, the Administration has proposed significant changes for the child welfare and Medicaid programs. We did not include in this report the Perkins Act even though it is a critically important program to disconnected youth. The reauthorization of the Perkins Act is inextricably tied to current debates about reforming high schools, many of which are especially failing youth at-risk of becoming disconnected and causing numerous youth to leave school for lives of poverty, joblessness, aimlessness, and worse. However, researchers, advocates, policymakers, and practitioners disagree about how to improve the Perkins Act. This disagreement stems from differing visions of the role of vocational education in the nation's education and training system, competing philosophies about education reform, and different assessments of the ability of Perkins to provoke change. Both because Perkins may not be considered until 2004 and because CLASP has not formulated a set of Perkins recommendations at this time, we have not included a separate chapter on Perkins.

7 White House, Office of the Press Secretary. (2002, December 23). *White House Task Force for Disadvantaged Youth.* Washington, DC: Author. The Task Force will focus on programs that serve youth ages 5-17. It does not include the Department of Labor programs that serve those aged 16 and up.

8 U.S. Department of Labor. (2002). *Youth Workforce Development: What We've Learned.* Washington, DC: Author, p. 4.

9 Sum, Khatiwada, et al., 2003, p. 7.

10 Besharov, D. (Ed.) (1999). *America's Disconnected Youth.* Washington, DC: Child Welfare League of America Press, pp. 3-11.

11 Wald & Martinez, forthcoming, p. 4.

12 Wald & Martinez, forthcoming, pp. 17-18. This study did include homeless youth, inmates of jails, prisons, juvenile homes, and long-stay hospitals.

13 Wald & Martinez, forthcoming.

14 U.S. Department of Labor, 2002, p. 1.

15 Sum, A., Harrington, P., Bartishevich, C., Fogg, N., Khatiwada, I., Motroni, J., Palma, S., Pond, N., Tobar, P., & Trub'skyy, M. (2002, September). *The Hidden Crisis in the High School Dropout Problems of Young Adults in the US: Recent Trends in Overall School Dropout Rates and Gender Differences in Dropout Behavior.* Boston, MA: Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University, p. 2.

16 Sum, Khatiwada, et al., 2003, p. 28.

17 Wald & Martinez, forthcoming, p. 6.

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21 Hotz, V.J., McElroy, S.W., & Sanders, S.G. (1997). The impacts of teenage childbearing on the mothers and the consequences of those impacts for government. In R. Maynard (Ed.), *Kids Having Kids: Economic Costs and Social Consequences of Teen Pregnancy.* Washington, DC: Urban Institute.

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25 Watts, H., & Nightingale, D.S. (1996). Adding it up: The economic impact of incarceration on individuals, families, and communities. *Oklahoma Criminal Justice Research Consortium Journal.* Available at http://www.doc.state.ok.us/DOCS/OCJRC/ocjrc55.htm; Freeman, R.B. (1994). *Crime and the Job Market* (NBER Working Paper No. 4910). Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.

26 Mayer, S.E. (1997). *What Money Can't Buy: Family Income and Children's Life Chances.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard, Table 3.1.

27 White House, 2002.

28 Sum, Harrington, et al., 2002, p. 18.

29 Sum, Khatiwada, et al., 2003, p. 55.

30 President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education. (2002). *A New Era: Revitalizing Special Education for Children and their Families.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, p. 50. Data comes from Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation reported in National Center on Secondary Education and Transition, Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota.

31 Wertheimer, R. (2002, December). *Youth Who "Age Out" of Foster Care: Troubled Lives, Troubling Prospects.* Child Trends Research Brief. Washington, DC: Child Trends, p. 1.

32 Wertheimer, 2002, p. 4.

33 Wertheimer, 2002, p. 4.

34 Wertheimer, 2002, p. 5. A recent study on the outcomes of children exiting foster care in three states reached similar results. Goerge, R.M., Bilaver, L., Lee, B.J. (2002, March). *Employment Outcomes for Youth Aging Out of Foster Care.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, Chapin Hall Center for Children.

35 Chaplin, D., & Lerman, R. (1997). *Dropping Out: Public and Private Costs.* Washington, DC: Urban Institute.

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38 See Sum, A., Mangum, G., & Taggart, R. (2002, June). *The Young, the Restless and the Jobless: The Case for a National Jobs Stimulus Program Targeted on America's Young Adults.* (Policy Issues Monograph 902-01.) Baltimore, MD: Sar Levitan Center for Social Policy Studies, p. 1.

39 Sum, Khatiwada, et al., 2003, p. 26.

40 Sum, Khatiwada, et al., 2003, p. 27.

41 Wald & Martinez, forthcoming, p. 13.

42 Sum, Khatiwada, et al., 2003, p. 6.

43 Sum, Khatiwada, et al., 2003, p. 82.

44 Ivry, R., & Doolittle, F. (2002). *Improving the Economic and Life Outcomes of At-Risk Youth.* New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation.

45 Ivry & Doolittle, 2002.

46 Comment to CLASP by Gary Walker. See also, for example, Walker, G., (1997). *Out of School and Unemployed: Principles for More Effective Policy and Programs.* Philadelphia, PA: Public/Private Ventures.

47 Wald & Martinez, forthcoming, p. 11.

48 See, e.g., Steinberg, A., Almeida, C., Allen, L., & Goldberger, S. (2003, March). *Four Building Blocks for a System of Educational Opportunity: Developing Pathways To and Through College for Urban Youth.* Boston, MA: Jobs For the Future; Pennington, H. (2003, February). Building one system for youth development and opportunity. In A. Lewis (Ed.), *Shaping the Future of American Youth: Youth Policy in the 21st Century.* Washington, DC:

American Youth Policy Forum; Tucker, M. (2003). *High School and Beyond: The System Is the Problem—And the Solution.* Washington, DC: National Center on Education and the Economy; Kazis, R., & Kopp, H. (1997). *Both Sides Now: New Directions in Promoting Work and Learning for Disadvantaged Youth.* Boston, MA: Jobs for the Future; Yohalem, N., & Pittman, K. (2001, October). *Powerful Pathways: Framing Options and Opportunities for Vulnerable Youth.* Takoma Park, MD: Youth Transition Funders Group.

49 Jennings, J. (2003). *From the Capital to the Classroom.* Washington, DC: Center for Educational Policy.

50 Kazis & Kopp, 1997, p. 8.

51 At-risk and disconnected youth vary in their readiness to take advantage of opportunities for improved education, for employment, and for necessary support services. Many disconnected youth are ready to become connected. Some may be ready but suffer from depression, substance abuse, and other health problems. Others are suspicious of programs and need help to connect to appropriate programs and services. Some may be passive or ambivalent and may move in and out of programs, jobs, housing, relationships, gangs, and neighborhoods. Other young people are incarcerated or involved in gangs, prostitution, and drug trafficking. See Ivry, R., & Doolittle, F. (2002, Fall). *Improving the Economic and Life Outcomes of At-Risk Youth.* New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, p. 8.

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1 Sum, A., Harrington, P., Bartishevich, C., Fogg, N., Khatiwada, I., Motroni, J., Palma, S., Pond, N., Tobar, P., & Trub'skyy, M. (2002, September). *The Hidden Crisis in the High School Dropout Problems of Young Adults in the US: Recent Trends in Overall School Dropout Rates and Gender Differences in Dropout Behavior.* Boston, MA: Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University, p. 14.

2 Murphy, G. (2003, January). *The Nation's Adult Education and Literacy System.* Prepared for the National Coalition for Literacy and the National Coalition of State Directors of Adult Education, p. 5.

3 http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/reauth/aeflarev.html

4 National Adult Education Program Directors Consortium. (Undated). *History of the Adult Education Act.* Washington, DC: Author. Available at: http://www.naepdc.org/issues/AEAHistort.htm.

5 For more information about the National Institute for Literacy, go to www.nifl.gov.

6 Core indicators include demonstrated improvements in literacy skill levels in reading, writing, and speaking English, numeracy, problem-solving, English language acquisition, and other literacy skills; placement, retention, or completion of postsecondary education, training, unsubsidized employment, or career advancement; receipt of a high school diploma or its equivalent; and other objective, quantifiable measures as identified by the state agency administering the program.

7 U.S. Department of Education. (2002, Fall). *Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, Program Year 1999-2000: A Report to Congress.* Washington, DC: Author, p. 5 and Appendix 2.

8 While the U.S. Department of Education estimates that, in 1999-2000, AEFLA accounted for about 25 percent of funds used at the state and local levels to support adult education and literacy, this figure probably excludes many nonprofit agencies and volunteer-supported programs.

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12 Murphy, 2003.

13 National Coalition for Literacy. (2003, January). *Recommendations and Resources for Reauthorization of TANF and the Workforce Investment Act and Appropriations for FY '04.* Chicago, IL: Author, p.1.

14 Murphy, 2003.

15 Meeder, H. (2003). *Preparing America's Future: Enhancing the Quality of Adult Education and Family Literacy.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

16 Performance data from the U.S. Department of Education available at www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/AdultEd/2000fhuman.html.

17 Martinson, K., & Strawn, J. (2003) *Built to Last: Why Skills Matter for Long-Run Success in Welfare Reform.* Washington, DC: Center for Law and Social Policy.

18 Cave, G., Bos, H., Doolittle, F., & Toussaint, C. (1993). *JOBSTART: Final Report on a Program for School Dropouts.* New York: MDRC.

19 Sum, Harrington, et al., 2002.

20 Murphy, 2003.

21 Sum, Harrington, et al., 2002, pp. 22-23.

22 Sum, Harrington, et al., 2002, p. 17.

23 Sum, Harrington, et al., 2002, pp. 23-26.

24 Haycock, K., & Huang, S. (2001). *Are Today's High School Graduates Ready?* Washington, DC: Education Trust, p. 7.

25 Information reported on the ACE website at www.acenet.edu/calec/ged/.

26 National Coalition for Literacy, 2003b, p. 5.

27 Murphy, 2003, p. 7.

28 National Coalition for Literacy, 2003b, p. 13.

29 National Coalition for Literacy, 2003b, pp. 2-3.

30 National Coalition for Literacy, 2003a, p. 3.

31 Language Trends. (2003, January 8). *Education Week*, p. 11. This article reported on a survey sample conducted form April to June 2002 by the Pew Hispanic Center and the Henry J. Kaiser Foundation.

32 Ruiz-de-Velasco, J., Fix, M., & Chu Clewell, B. (2000, December). *Overlooked and Underserved: Immigrant Students in U.S. Secondary Schools.* Washington, DC: Urban Institute, p. 33.

33 Sum, Harrington, et al., 2002, p. 31.

34 Sum, Harrington, et al., 2002, p. 18.

35 President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education. (2002, July). *A New Era: Revitalizing Special Education for Children and Their Families.* Washington, DC: Author, p. 1.

36 American Youth Policy Forum and Center for Education Policy. (2002). *Educating Children with Disabilities: The Good News and the Work Ahead.* Washington, DC: Authors, p. 50.

37 President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education, 2002, p. 47.

38 National Coalition for Literacy, 2003a, p. 2.

39 Sticht, T.G. (2002, August). *"Double Duty Dollars": Investing in the Education of Adults to Improve the Educability of Children and the Employability of Their Parents.* Chicago: National Coalition for Literacy.

40 National Center for Family Literacy. (1994). *The Power of Family Literacy.* Louisville, KY: Author.

41 U.S. Department of Education. (2003, February). *President's Budget Request for ED.* Washington, DC: Author. Available at www.ed.gov.

42 Research results available on the National Center for Family Literacy website at www.famlit.org/research/researchncfl.html.

43 Grissmer, D., Rand Corporation. (2001, December). Personal communication.

44 See numerous publications of the National Institute for Early Education Research, including Ramey, C.T., & Campbell, F.A. (1992). *Poverty, Early Childhood Education, and Academic Competence: The Abecedarian Experiment.* Rutgers, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research. Available at www.nieer.org.

45 Sum, Harrington, et al., 2002, p. 11.

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47 Sum, Harrington, et al., 2002, p. 12.

48 National Coalition for Literacy, 2003b, p. 1.

49 Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice. (1993, January). *Reduced Recidivism and Increased Employment Opportunity Through Research-Based Reading Instruction.* Washington, DC: Author. See also *Recidivisim Study Summaries* available at www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/Adult Ed/OCE/19abstracts.html for summary of Texas Youth Commission 1993 study that found that youth who received GEDs while incarcerated had lower rearrest and reincarceration rates than those who did not receive GEDs.

50 National Coalition for Literacy, 2003b, p. 7.

51 For elaboration on many of the recommendations below and additional ones for adult education generally, see The National Literacy Summit 2000. (2000, September). *From the Margins to the Mainstream: An Action Agenda for Literacy.* Chicago, IL: National Coalition for Literacy. Available at www.natcoalitionliteracy.org/.

The Higher Education Act and Disconnected Youth

1 This amount includes Federal Family Education Loan capital, Perkins loan capital from revolving funds, and institutional and state matching funds required by statute. It does not include consolidation loans that are refinancings of existing student loans and, therefore, do not represent additional capital available to pay for postsecondary education. U.S. Department of Education. (2002). *Fiscal Year 2004 Budget Summary.* Washington, DC: Author, p. 43.

2 Wald, M., & Martinez, T. (Forthcoming). *Disconnected Youth: Some Thoughts on Strategy.* Menlo Park, CA: Hewlett Foundation, Table 2, Demographics of Disconnected Youth, Ages 16-24. All data on disconnected youth in this chapter come from the Wald & Martinez paper.

3 Wolanin, T.R. (2003). Introduction. In T. Wolanin (Ed.), *Reauthorizing the Higher Education Act: Issues and Options* (pp. 1-8). Washington, DC: The Institute for Higher Education Policy.

4 Wolanin, 2003.

5 Wald & Martinez, forthcoming.

6 Judy, R.W., & D'Amico, C. (1997). *Workforce 2020: Work and Workers in the 21st Century.* Indianapolis, IN: Hudson Institute, p. 100.

7 The College Board. (2002a). *Trends in College Pricing 2002.* Washington, DC: Author. Table 3, p. 6.

8 Wald & Martinez, forthcoming.

9 Wald & Martinez, forthcoming, Table 3, Disconnected Youth, Ages 16-25 by Sex.

10 Wald & Martinez, forthcoming, Table 3, Disconnected Youth, Ages 16-25 by Sex.

11 Wald & Martinez, forthcoming.

12 Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance. (2001). *Access Denied: Restoring the Nation's Commitment to Equal Educational Opportunity.* Washington, DC: Author, p. 10.

13 Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance. (2002). *Empty Promises: The Myth of College Access in America.* Washington, DC: Author, p. 27.

14 Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, 2001.

15 St. John, E.P. (2002). *The Access Challenge: Rethinking the Causes of the New Inequality.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana Education Policy Center; and Terenzini, P.T., Cabrera, A.F., & Bernal, E.M. (2001). *Swimming Against the Tide: The Poor in American Higher Education.* New York: The College Board.

16 U.S. Department of Education, 2002.

17 Computed based on The College Board. (2002b). *Trends in Student Aid 2002.* Washington, DC: Author, Figure 6, p. 13 and The College Board, 2002a.

18 American Council on Education. (2003). *Recommendations for Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.* Washington, DC: Author, p. 2.

19 The College Board, 2002b, Table 7, p. 13.

20 United Negro College Fund, National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, United States Student Association, and National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators recommend making Pell Grants an entitlement. American Council on Education, 2003.

21 In recent years, federal benefits to individuals pursuing a postsecondary education have increasingly been in the form of tax benefits, which are, in effect, non-discretionary grants. The largest and most prominent of these new tax benefits are the HOPE Scholarship and the Lifetime Learning Tax Credit enacted by the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997. These tax benefits do not reach low-income students or their families because these individuals have little or no income tax liability. Therefore, these tax provisions do not provide significant public benefits by expanding access to higher education for those who would not otherwise be able to attend. See, Wolanin, T.R. (2001). *Rhetoric and Reality: Effects and Consequences of the HOPE Scholarship.* Washington, DC: The Institute for Higher Education Policy.

22 A number of constructive recommendations to achieve this objective are to be found in Strawn, J., & Whistler, V. (2003). *Preliminary Recommendations on Higher Education Act Reauthorization.* Washington, DC: Center for Law and Social Policy. Available at www.clasp.org/Pubs/Pubs_PostsecEd.

23 U.S. Department of Education, 2002.

24 The College Board, 2002a, Table 5, p. 8.

25 Section 402B(a)(1). Other outreach programs in the Higher Education Act are Upward Bound and GEAR UP, which serve low-income and disadvantaged students in middle and high school. For students in postsecondary education, the Student Support Services program provides supplementary instruction in study skills; reading, writing, and mathematics; personal and academic counseling; tutoring; and mentoring—all aimed at improving retention and graduation rates.

26 Reeve, A. Director, National TRIO Clearinghouse. (2003, February). Personal communication.

27 Council for Opportunity in Education. (2002). *What Is TRIO?: Programs at a Glance.* Washington, DC: Author. Available at www.trioprograms.org.

28 Council for Opportunity in Education, 2002.

29 Woo, J.H. (2002). *Clearing Accounts: The Causes of Student Loan Default.* Rancho Cordova, CA: EdFund, p. 1.

30 Wald & Martinez, forthcoming.

31 Section 484(d)(1).

32 National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators. (2002). *Higher Education Act Reauthorization Recommendations.* Washington, DC: Author, p. 75.

33 Wald & Martinez, forthcoming.

34 Section 401(b)(8).

35 Section 484(r).

36 Alliance for Equity in Higher Education. (2003). *Policy Priorities for the Higher Education Act Reauthorization.* Washington, DC: Author, p. 7.

37 The Alliance for Equity in Higher Education has recommended that both the prohibition on Pell Grants for prisoners and the "Suspension of Eligibility for Drug-Related Offenses" be repealed. NASFAA has recommended that the "Suspension of Eligibility for Drug-Related Offenses" be repealed.

38 Wald & Martinez, forthcoming.

39 Section 472(8).

40 Section 472(8)(B).

41 Section 419N(a).

42 Section 419N(b)(5).

43 Mezey, J., Greenberg, M., & Schumacher, R. (2002, October). *The Vast Majority of Federally Elibible Children Did Not Receive Child Care Assistance in FY 2000: Increased Child Care Funding Needed to Help More Families.* Washington, DC: Center for Law and Social Policy.

44 Schulman, K., Blank, H., & Ewen, D. (2001). *A Fragile Foundation: State Child Care Assistance Policies.* Washington, DC: Children's Defense Fund.

45 Children's Defense Fund. (2003, March). *State Budget Cuts Create a Growing Child Care Crisis for Low-Income Working Families.* Washington, DC: Author.

46 Section 443(b)(2)(B).

47 Section 441(c)(1).

48 National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, 2002, p. 50.

49 Section 428K(a).

50 Sections 428K(c) and (d).

51 Section 428K(c)(3)(A).

52 Wald & Martinez, forthcoming.

53 Section 484(a)(5).

54 *Plyler v. Doe* 457 U.S. 202 (1982).

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Disconnected Youth

1 Federal education funds are forward funded; consequently these funds are available to recipients in FY 2004.

2 U.S. Department of Education. (2003). *Department of Education Fiscal Year 2003 Congressional Action.* Available at www.ed.gov/offices/OUS/Budget03/03app.pdf. There are provisions in IDEA for public school districts to support special education services in sectarian and other private schools in the same community.

3 National Council on Disability. (2000, January 25). *Back to School on Civil Rights.* Washington, DC: Author. Available at www.ncd.gov/newsroom/publications/backtoschool_1.html.

4 American Youth Policy Forum and Center for Education Policy. (2002). *Educating Children With Disabilities: The Good News and the Work Ahead.* Washington, DC: Author, p. 4.

5 American Youth Policy Forum and Center for Education Policy, 2002, p. 50.

6 President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education. (2002, July). *A New Era: Revitalizing Special Education for Children and Their Families.* Washington, DC: Author, p. 1.

7 Wald, M., & Martinez, T. (Forthcoming). *Disconnected Youth: Some Thoughts on Strategy.* Menlo Park, CA: Hewlett Foundation.

8 President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education, 2002, p. 50.

9 Section 601(d)(1)(A).

10 For more information about S. 1248, visit the Council on Exceptional Children website: www.cec.sped.org.

11 Finn, C.E., Rotherham, A.J., & Hokanson, C.R. (2001, May). *Special Education for a New Century.* Washington, DC: Thomas B. Fordham Foundation and the Progressive Policy Institute, p. v.

12 National Council on Disability, 2000.

13 IDEA, Section 611(a).

14 U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. (2002). *Data Tables for OSEP Reported State Data: IDEA Part B Child Count,* Table AA3. Retrieved March 17, 2003 from www.ideadata.org/arc_toc3.asp#partbCC.

15 U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, 2002. The remaining categories are: hearing impairments, visual impairments, deaf-blindness, orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, multiple disabilities, and developmental delay (for children ages 3-9).

16 IDEA, Section 612(a)(1).

17 IDEA, Section 612(a)(5).

18 IEP preparation can be paid for under Medicaid Administrative Claiming funds; HHS has proposed new guidelines which would no longer allow such claims, among other changes that could restrict school use of Medicaid funds. Council of Chief State School Officers. (2002, December 23). *Letter to the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services.* Washington, DC: Author.

19 IDEA, Section 614(d).

20 IDEA, Section 614(d)(1)(A)(vii).

21 PL 107-110 Section 111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II)(cc).

22 U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, 2002, Table AA1.

23 IDEA, Section 612(a)(1)(B)(ii). There are limitations on the services required to be provided to students incarcerated in adult prisons, which are specified in IDEA, Section 614(d)(6).

24 U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, 2002, Table AA7.

25 Lyon, G.R., Fletcher, J.M., Shaywitz, S.E., Shaywitz, B.A., Torgesen, J.K., Wood, F.B., et al. (2002, May). Rethinking learning disabilities. In C.E. Finn, Jr., A.J. Rotherham, & C.R. Hokanson, Jr. (Eds.), *Special Education for a New Century*. Washington, DC: Thomas B. Fordham Foundation and the Progressive Policy Institute, p. 262.

26 Lyon, G.R., et al., 2002, p. 266.

27 IDEA, Section 602(26).

28 34 CFR § 300.541(a)(2).

29 IDEA, Section 614(b)(5); 34 CFR § 300.541(b). The severe discrepancy also cannot be caused by a visual, hearing, or motor impairment or mental retardation.

30 Ordover, E.L. (2002, August 19). *Public Comment Letter on the Report of the President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education*. Washington, DC: Center for Law and Education, p. 15.

31 Improving Education Results for Children with Disabilities Act of 2003, H.R. 1350, Section 204 (introduced March 19, 2003).

32 In FY 2003, Reading First, established by No Child Left Behind, will provide $995 million for the development of comprehensive reading programs in kindergarten through third grade. Almost 70 percent of low-income 4th graders cannot read at a basic level. From the U.S. Department of Education's No Child Left Behind website: www.nochildleftbehind.gov/next/faqs/reading.html.

33 Lyon, G.R., et al., 2002, pp. 279-280.

34 H.R. 1350, Section 203.

35 Ivry, R., & Doolittle, F. (2002). *Improving the Economic and Life Outcomes of At-Risk Youth. A Concept Paper*. New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation. Available at www.mdrc.org/Reports2002/hewlett_youthpaper/hewlett_youthpaper.htm.

36 U.S. Department of Education. (2001). *To Assure the Free Appropriate Public Education of All Children with Disabilities: Twenty-third Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*. Washington, DC: Author, pp. II-22.

37 For example, in California in 1996, community day schools were established in response to increased expulsions due to zero tolerance policies. They serve students in K-12 and are in separate buildings from other public schools. Students may enroll at any time and are usually referred by courts or schools. They provide mental health and career guidance services along with six hours of instruction per day. There are over 200 community day schools, and they probably serve 15,000 students annually. They are funded solely through state dollars. Public/Private Ventures. (2002, September). *Federal Funding Streams Supporting the Needs of High-Risk 16- To 24-Year-Olds: A Strategy Paper for Investing In Improving Youth Outcomes*. New York: Author, p. 19.

38 See the Civil Rights Project. (2000). *Opportunities Suspended: The Devastating Consequences of Zero Tolerance and School Discipline Policies.* Cambridge, MA: Author.

39 Council of Chief State School Officers. (2001, April). *State Support of Alternative and CBO High Schools.* Foundation proposal. Washington, DC: Author.

40 The Supreme Court has held that any suspension of a student with a disability for more than 10 days constitutes a change in placement.

41 Silverstein, R. (1999, May 7). *Overview of the Major Discipline Provisions in the 1999 IDEA Regulations* (analyzing 34 C.F.R. §§ 300.519-300.529). Washington, DC: IDEA Partnerships. Available at www.fape.org/idea/what_idea_is/discipline_overview.htm.

42 H.R. 1350, Section 205.

43 U.S. Department of Education, 2001, p. II-29, Table II-10.

44 Bonner-Tompkins, E. (2002, January). Disproportionate representation and the achievement gap in special education. *Gaining Ground, 4*(1), 3, 5.

45 Civil Rights Project. (2002, June). *Racial Inequity in Special Education: Executive Summary for Federal Policy Makers.* Cambridge, MA: Author. Available at www.civilrightsproject.harvard.edu.

46 President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education, 2002, p. 50.

47 National Council on Disability, 2000, p. 11. The lack of compliance extends beyond the transition provisions; the report notes that "90 percent of the states (n=45) had failed to ensure compliance in the category of general supervision" in the local implementation of Part B. The period studied was 1994-1998.

48 34 CFR § 300.347; Storms, J., O'Leary, E., & Williams, J. (2000, May). *The Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act of 1997: Transition Requirements—A Guide for States, Districts, Schools, Universities and Families.* Minneapolis, MN: Institute on Community Integration (UAP), National Transition Network, University of Minnesota.

49 34 CFR § 300.347. In states that transfer rights from the parents to the student at the age of majority, the IEP must include a statement that the student has been informed of his or her rights under IDEA's Part B, which will transfer to the student upon reaching the age of majority. This statement must be included beginning at least one year before the student reaches the age of majority.

50 34 CFR § 300.347(b)(3).

51 IDEA, Section 613(f)(2)(B).

52 Rehabilitation Act, Section 101(a).

53 Social Security Administration. (2003). *2002 SSI Annual Report.* Washington, DC: Author. Available at www.ssa.gov/OACT/SSIR/SSI02/.

54 P.L. 105-17, Section 618.

55 IDEA, Section 618(a)(1)(v).

56 P.L. 105-17, Part B, Section 612(a)(1)(v).

57 P.L. 107-110, Title I, Section 1907.

58 P.L. 107-110, Title I, Section 1111(h)(1).

The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act and Disconnected Youth

1 42 U.S.C. 5701 *et seq.* Available at www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/fysb/Missing.pdf.

2 A drafting error in the last reauthorization technically expanded the age range for such services to youth not more than 21 years of age.

3 The current number of youth served by RHYA programs is not yet tabulated due to a transition to a new RHYA data collection system. Demographic and organizational information about RHYA participants and grantees will be available in a forthcoming report to Congress on RHYA programs.

4 P.L. 106-71.

5 42 U.S.C. 5732a.

6 45 CFR 1351.1(l).

7 Hammer, H., Finkelhor, D., & Sedlak, A. (2002). Runaway/thrownaway children: National estimates and characteristics. *National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway and Thrownaway Children* (NISMART Bulletin Series). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Available at www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/ojjdp/196469.pdf.

8 42 U.S.C. 5701.

9 Hammer et al., 2002.

10 Greene, J., Ringwalt, C., Kelly, J., Iachan, R., & Cohen, Z. (1995). *Youth with Runaway, Thrownaway, and Homeless Experiences: Prevalence, Drug Use, and Other At-Risk Behaviors. Volume I: Final Report.* Research Triangle Park, NC: Research Triangle Institute.

11 Hammer et al., 2002; Robertson, M., & Toro, P. (1999). Homeless youth: Research, intervention, and policy. In L. Fosburg & D. Dennis (Eds.), *Practical Lessons: The 1998 National Symposium on Homelessness Research* (pp. 3-1–3-32). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Available at http://aspe.hhs.gov/progsys/homeless/symposium/3-Youth.htm

12 Sedlak, A., Schultz, D., Wiener, S., & Cohen, B. (1997). *National Evaluation of Runaway and Homeless Youth: Final Report.* Rockville, MD: Westat, Inc.

13 CSR, Incorporated. (1997). *Evaluation of the Transitional Living Program for Homeless Youth: Phase II Report.* Washington, DC: Author.

14 Robertson & Toro, 1999.

15 Greene et al., 1995.

16 Courtney, M.E, & Piliavin, I. (1998). *Foster Youth Transitions to Adulthood: Outcomes 12 to 18 Months After Leaving Out-of-Home Care.* Madison, WI: School of Social Work, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

17 Westat, Inc. (1991). *A National Evaluation of Title IV-E Foster Care Independent Living Programs for Youth.* Washington, DC: Author.

18 Wilder Research Center. *Homeless Youth in Minnesota: A Statewide Survey of People Without Permanent Shelter.* Retrieved March 1, 2002, from http://wilder.org/research/reports/pdf/homlessyouth9-01.pdf.

19 Robertson & Toro, 1999.

20 Sedlak et al., 1997.

21 CSR, Incorporated, 1997.

22 Wilson, M., & Houghton, A. (2001). The McKinney Act's Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program. *The Prevention Researcher, 8,* 11.

23 National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, National Clearinghouse on Homeless Education, National Coalition for the Homeless, National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, and National Network for Youth. (2002). *McKinney-Vento 2001—Law into Practice: Unaccompanied Youth.* Retrieved February 26, 2003, from www.nlchp.org.

24 Sedlak et al., 1997.

25 CSR, Incorporated, 1997.

26 Sedlak et al., 1997.

27 CSR, Incorporated, 1997.

28 National Network for Youth. (2003). *Policy Recommendations: Runaway and Homeless Youth Act Appropriations.* Washington, DC: Author; National Collaboration for Youth. (2003). *Runaway and Homeless Youth Act Programs (RHYA).* Washington, DC: Author.

29 National Network for Youth, 2003.

30 National Network for Youth. (2003, February 9). *Runaway and Homeless Youth Act: Reauthorization and Program Management Agendas of the National Network for Youth.* Presented at National Network for Youth Symposium 2003: Celebrating the Spirit of Youth in a Time of Challenge, Washington, DC.

31 Title IX of S. 476, as passed by United States Senate, April 9, 2003.

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program and Disconnected Youth

1 Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation. (2003, February). *Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program: Fifth Annual Report to Congress.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Table 12.2.

2 CLASP calculations based on U.S. Department of Health and Human Services FY 2002 TANF expenditure data.

3 Youth are defined as those 13-19 years of age. Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation. (2003, February). *Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program: Fifth Annual Report to Congress.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

4 Acs, G., & Koball, H. (2003, June). *TANF and the Status of Teen Mothers Under Age 18.* New Federalism Series: Issues and Options for States. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.

5 Overall, women aged 20-45 who are former teen mothers have borne an average of 2.58 children, whereas women in this age group who had their first child at age 20-24 had an average of 2.17 children—a statistically significant difference. Child Trends. (2001). *Analysis of the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth.* Unpublished data.

6 Manlove, J. (1998). The influence of high school dropout and school disengagement on the risk of school-age pregnancy. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 8*(2), 187-220. Further, teen mothers are less likely than mothers who delay their childbearing to have a high school diploma or GED by age 30 (61 percent versus 91 percent), and their children have poorer school performance. As a result, the ability for these young mothers and their families to achieve economic self-sufficiency is a considerable challenge. Hotz, V.J., McElroy, S.W., & Sanders, S.G. (1996). The impacts of teenage childbearing on the mothers and the consequences of those impacts for government. In R. Maynard (Ed.), *Kids Having Kids: Economic Costs and Social Consequences of Teen Pregnancy.* New York: The Robin Hood Foundation. Wertheimer, R., & Moore, K. (1998). *Childbearing by Teens: Links to Welfare Reform.* Number A-24 in the New Federalism Series. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.

7 The Teenage Parent Demonstration and the New Chance Demonstration both operated in various sites around the country. Duffy, J., & Levin-Epstein, J. (2002, April). *Add It Up: Teen Parents and Welfare ... Undercounted, Oversanctioned, Underserved.* Washington, DC: Center for Law and Social Policy. Appendix B describes five evaluations.

8 The data from the CLASP survey on teen parents were compared to data on overall caseloads (using different years and different survey instruments). Duffy & Levin-Epstein, 2002.

9 The Ohio LEAP research also found some disheartening implications related to sanctions. A majority of those teen parents with multiple sanctions reported less spending on essentials, such as food and clothing. And, as the researchers noted, "disturbingly, children appear to have suffered at least as much as their teenage parents." Long, D., Gueron, J.M., et al. (1996, April). *LEAP: Three-Year Impacts of Ohio's Welfare Initiative to Improve School Attendance Among Teenage Parents.* New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation.

10 For more information on the school/training requirement, see "School/Training Requirements" (1999, March) on the State Policy Documentation Project (SPDP) website:

www.spdp.org/school/. SPDP also looked at state Medicaid, TANF, and child care policies. Note that some of these policies may have changed since the Project's data collection.

11 There is relatively little data on what causes teen parents to become sanctioned. A Center for Impact Research survey of 474 young parents on TANF (virtually all of the sample were parents as teenagers) found that 21 percent had boyfriends who were sabotaging their efforts to attend school or go to work. Center for Impact Research. (2000, February). *Domestic Violence and Birth Control Sabotage: A Report from the Teen Parent Project.* Chicago, IL: Author. Available at www.impactresearch.org/documents/dvandbirthcontrol.pdf.

12 Nearly 2,500 teen parents in five responding states were sanctioned in one month for failure to comply with the school/graining requirement. Duffy & Levin-Epstein, 2002.

13 Moore, K.A., Vandivere, S., & Ehrle, J. (2000, June). *Turbulence and Child Well-Being.* Assessing the New Federalism, Series B, No. B-16. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.

14 Boyer, D., & Fine, D. (1990). *Victimization and Other Risk Factors for Child Maltreatment Among School Age Parents: A Longitudinal Study* (No. 90-CA-1375). Washington, DC: National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. See also Leiderman, S., & Almo, C. (2001, October). *Interpersonal Violence and Adolescent Pregnancy: Prevalence and Implications for Practice and Policy.* Washington, DC: Center for Assessment and Policy Development and the National Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Parenting, and Prevention.

15 Shapiro, D.L., & Marcy, H.M. (2002, April). *Knocking on the Door: Barriers to Welfare and Other Assistance for Teen Parents: A Three-City Research Study.* Chicago, IL: Center for Impact Research. Available at www.impactresearch.org/documents/CIRknockdoor.pdf.

16 Reeg, B., Grisham, C., & Shephard, A. (2002). *Families on the Edge: Homeless Young Parents and Their Welfare Experiences.* Washington, DC: Center for Law and Social Policy and National Network for Youth.

17 Chase-Lansdale, P.L., Levine Coley, R., Lohman, B.J., & Pittman, L.D. (2002, January). *Welfare Reform: What About the Children? Welfare, Children & Families: A Three-City Study.* Policy Brief 02-1. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University.

18 Chase-Lansdale, P.L., Moffitt, R.A., Lohman, B.J., Cherlin, A.J., Coley, R.L., Pittman, L.D., Roff, J., & Votruba-Drzal, E. (2003, March 7). Mothers' transition from welfare to work and the well-being of preschoolers and adolescents. *Science, 299,* 1548-1552.

19 Gennetian, L.A., Duncan, G., Knox, V., Vargas, W., Clark-Kauffman, E., & London, A. (2002, May). *How Welfare and Work Policies for Parents Affect Adolescents.* New York: MDRC.

20 National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy citing the Adolescent Health survey. Available at www.teenpregnancy.org/about/announcements/campaign_update/winter01/newsbite.asp.

21 Brown, B. (2001, August). *Teens, Jobs, and Welfare: Implications for Social Policy.* Research Brief. Washington, DC: Child Trends.

22 SRI International. *The National Longitudinal Transition Study: A Summary of Findings.* Available at www.sri.com/policy/cehs/nlts/nltssum.html. Retrieved November 14, 2001.

23 Kirby, D. (2001, May). *Emerging Answers: Research Findings on Programs to Reduce Teen Pregnancy* Washington, DC: National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy.

24 American Public Human Services Association. (1999, July). *State Teen Pregnancy Prevention and Abstinence Education Efforts: Survey Results on the Use of TANF and Title V Funds.* Washington, DC: Author.

25 Cohen, M. (1999, April). *Tapping TANF: When and How Welfare Funds Can Support Reproductive Health or Teen Parent Initiatives.* Washington, DC: Center for Law and Social Policy.

26 Baker, L.R. (2002, February 1). *Futures for Kids: Illinois Teen REACH. Request for Proposals.* Springfield, IL: Illinois Department of Human Services; Simon, D. (2002, March 25). *Adolescents and TANF: Working Session.* Presented at a meeting sponsored by the Center for Law and Social Policy, Washington, DC.

27 Carpenter, S., Clyman, R., Davidson, A., & Steiner, J.F. (September 2001). The association of foster care or kinship care with adolescent sexual behavior and first pregnancy. *Pediatrics, 108*(3), e46.

28 Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare and Department of Labor and Industry. (2003, June 4). Memo to Local Workforce staff and Youth Council staff.

29 The White House. (2002, February). *Working Toward Independence.* Washington, DC: The White House. Available at www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/02/welfare-reform-announcement-book.pdf. The President's plan to strengthen welfare reform calls on states to include strategies for "youth development" in their state plans.

30 The Work, Opportunity, and Responsibility for Kids Act of 2002, Sec. 201 (b)(2)(A) and Sec. 201 (b)(2)(A)(v).

31 Aber, L. (2003, March 11). Letter to members of Congress. Available at www.nccp.org/welfare_letter.html.

32 Kurtz, S.E. (2002, March-April). Welfare reform causes troubling decline in school achievement and increase in problem behaviors among adolescents. *Youth Law News, 23*(2), 1-5.

33 Katz, I., & Smith, S. (2002, July 17). Letter to U.S. Senate Finance Committee members.

34 Levin-Epstein, J., & Grisham, G. (2001, November). *Teen Pregnancy Prevention: A Key Strategy in the Family Formation Debate.* Washington, DC: Center for Law and Social Policy. Available at www.clasp.org/Pubs/DMS/Documents/1012503181.48/teen_pregnancy_a_key_strategy.pdf.

The Workforce Investment Act and Disconnected Youth

1 U.S. Department of Labor. (2002). *Youth Workforce Development: What We've Learned.* Washington, DC: Author, p. 1.

2 During the economic downturn of 2001 and 2002, 53 percent of the 2 million in employment losses were by youth 16-24. See Sum, A., Mangum, G., & Taggart, R. (2002, June). *The Young, the Restless and the Jobless: The Case for a National Jobs Stimulus Program Targeted on America's Young Adults.* (Policy Issues Monograph 902-01). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins, Institute for Policy Studies, Sar Levitan Center for Social Policy Studies, p. 1.

3 U.S. Department of Labor. (Undated). *The Workforce Investment Act of 1998: A Vision for Youth.* Washington, DC: Author. Available at http://wdsc.doleta.gov/sga/youth/vision.htm.

4 Funding fell to $1 billion in 2003 from an equivalent of $2.72 billion (in 2003 dollars) in 1985 (calculated using Bureau of Labor Statistics CPI Calculator, available at www.bls.gov/cpi/).

5 Older youth (ages 19 to 21) are also eligible for services as adults under WIA and may be concurrently enrolled in youth and adult programs.

6 In order to qualify as low-income, the youth must: receive, or be a member of a family that receives, cash assistance from a needs-based public assistance program; have an income, or be a member of a family that received a total family income, in the six-month period prior to application that does not exceed the federal poverty line (FPL) or 70 percent of the Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL) (the LLSIL ranges from 70 percent to 120 percent of the FPL depending upon family size and geographic region); be a member of a household that received, or was determined eligible to receive, Food Stamps in the six months prior to applying for services; qualify as a homeless individual under the McKinney Act; be a foster child for whom state or local government payments are made, or be a disabled individual. 29 USC 2801(25). Up to 5 percent of youth funds may be used to serve youth who are not low-income but who are: basic skills deficient; one or more grade levels below the grade level appropriate to the age of the individual; pregnant or parenting; disabled, including learning disabilities; homeless or runaway youth; offenders; or youth who face serious barriers to employment as identified by the local board.

7 29 USC 2801(13).

8 Formula funds must be used to provide services to low-income youth who have dropped out or who have received a diploma or GED but lack basic skills and are unemployed or underemployed. 29 USC 2801(33).

9 29 USC 2854 (c)(1).

10 29 USC 2854 (c)(2).

11 The number who were in employment, postsecondary education, or advanced training in the first quarter after exit and received a credential by the end of the third quarter after exit as a percentage of all who exited during the quarter.

12 Of all in-school youth and any out-of-school youth assessed to be in need of basic skills, work readiness skills, and/or occupational skills, the number who attained skills as a percentage of total goals.

13 29 USC 2854 (h)(2).

14 29 USC 2854 (h)(4).

15 29 USC 2914 (a)-(e).

16 U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. (2003). *Programs and Services.* Washington, DC: Author. Available at www.doleta.gov/youth_services/Programs_Services.asp.

17 29 USC 2914 (f).

18 See, for example, Stoneman, D. (2003, January 24). *Youth Development and the Preparation for Youth Employment: Self-Sufficiency and Fulfillment, All Young People Want to Be Somebody, Open the Doors to All Youth.* Presented at American Youth Policy Forum Briefing, Washington, DC.

19 Working Group. (1996). *Promising and Effective Practices Network (PEPNET) Criteria.* Washington, DC: National Youth Employment Coalition. Available at www.nyec.org.

20 Sum, A., et al. (1997). *A Generation of Challenge: Pathways to Success for Urban Youth.* Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, Institute for Policy Studies. Ivry, R., & Doolittle, F. (2000). *Improving the Economic and Life Outcomes of At-Risk Youth.* New York, NY: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation.

21 Jekielek, S., Cochran, S., & Hair, E. (2002). *Employment Programs and Youth Development: A Synthesis.* Washington, DC: Child Trends.

22 Funding fell to $1 billion in 2003 from an equivalent of $2.72 billion (in 2003 dollars) in 1985 (calculated using Bureau of Labor Statistics CPI Calculator, available at www.bls.gov/cpi/).

23 States' PY 2000 and 2001 WIASRD. Available at www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/performance/2-26_Youth%20Demographics_for%20Web.xls.

24 Among the approximately 115,000 exiters in 2000, about 99,000 were aged 14-18 and about 16,000 were aged 19-21, according to data drawn from the Workforce Investment Act Standardized Record Data (WIASRD) database for PY 2000, which includes data on all participants who exited the program between July 1, 2000, and June 30, 2001. Among the over 126,000 exiters in 2001, about 104,000 were aged 14-18 and about 23,000 were aged 19-21, according to data drawn from the WIASRD database for PY 2001, which includes data on all participants who exited the program between July 1, 2001, and June 30, 2002.

25 Wald, M., & Martinez, T. (Forthcoming). *Disconnected Youth: Some Thoughts on Strategy.* Menlo Park, CA: Hewlett Foundation.

26 Aggregated, preliminary national performance data have been published for program year 2001 (but not 2000). U.S. Department of Labor (2003). *Preliminary PY 2001 WIA Performance: National Roll-Up.* Washington, DC: Author. Available from www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/documents/AnnualReports/PY01_National_Roll-up_1-30.xls.

The results for older youth (aged 19-21) were:

- Employment: 67 percent of those who exited services entered employment.
- Retention: 78 percent retained employment six months after initial placement.
- Earnings change: the average earnings increase for this group after six months was $3,114 (calculated as the post-program earnings increases as compared with pre-program earnings among those who were employed in the first quarter after exit and who were not enrolled in postsecondary education or advanced training in the third quarter after exit).

- Credential rate: 40 percent of those who exited were in employment, postsecondary education, or advanced training in the first quarter after exit and received a credential by the end of the third quarter after exit.

The results for younger youth (aged 14-18) were:

- Skills attainment: 83 percent of those assessed to be in need of basic skills, work readiness skills, or occupational skills did attain skills.
- Diploma/GED attainment: 54 percent of those who did not have a high school diploma upon registration obtained diplomas or GEDs by the end of first quarter after exiting.
- Retention: 54 percent of those who exited were involved in postsecondary education, advanced training, employment, military service, or an advanced apprenticeship in the third quarter after exit.

27 Sum, A., et al. (1997). *A Generation of Challenge: Pathways to Success for Urban Youth.* Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, Institute for Policy Studies; Ivry & Doolittle, 2000.

28 Sum, A., et al. (2003). *The Summer Job Market for the Nation's Teenagers from 2000-2002 and the Employment Outlook for the Summer of 2003: The Case for a Federally-Funded Summer Jobs Stimulus for Youth.* Boston, MA: Northeastern University.

29 National Youth Employment Coalition. (2002). *The Youth Opportunity (YO) Grant Program.* (Fact Sheet). Washington, DC: Author.

30 There is no publicly available data concerning the share currently being spent, although data for PY 2001 indicate that about 83 percent of those who exited youth programs were in school when they enrolled in a WIA program. Source: States' PY 2000 and 2001 WIAS-RD. Available at www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/performance/2-26_Youth%20Demographics_for%20Web.xls.

31 Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor. (February 2003). *Proposed Reauthorization Approach.* Washington, DC: Author. Available at www.doleta.gov/budget/04legprop.pdf.

32 See note 6.

33 GAO-02-413.

34 Described above, page 77.

35 Under the House Education and the Workforce Committee proposal, the three are: "entry into employment, education or advanced training, or military service; attainment of secondary school diplomas or their recognized equivalents; and attainment of literacy or numeracy skills." The three measures for younger youth under current law are: "placement and retention in postsecondary education or advanced training, or placement and retention in military service, employment, or qualified apprenticeships; attainment of secondary school diplomas and their recognized equivalents; attainment of basic skills and, as appropriate, work readiness or occupational skills."

36 Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor. (February 2003). *Proposed Reauthorization Approach.* Washington, DC: Author. Available at www.doleta.gov/budget/04legprop.pdf.

37 Jobs for the Future and John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development. (2002). *Evaluation of the Transition to Comprehensive Youth Services Under the Workforce Investment Act.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration.

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